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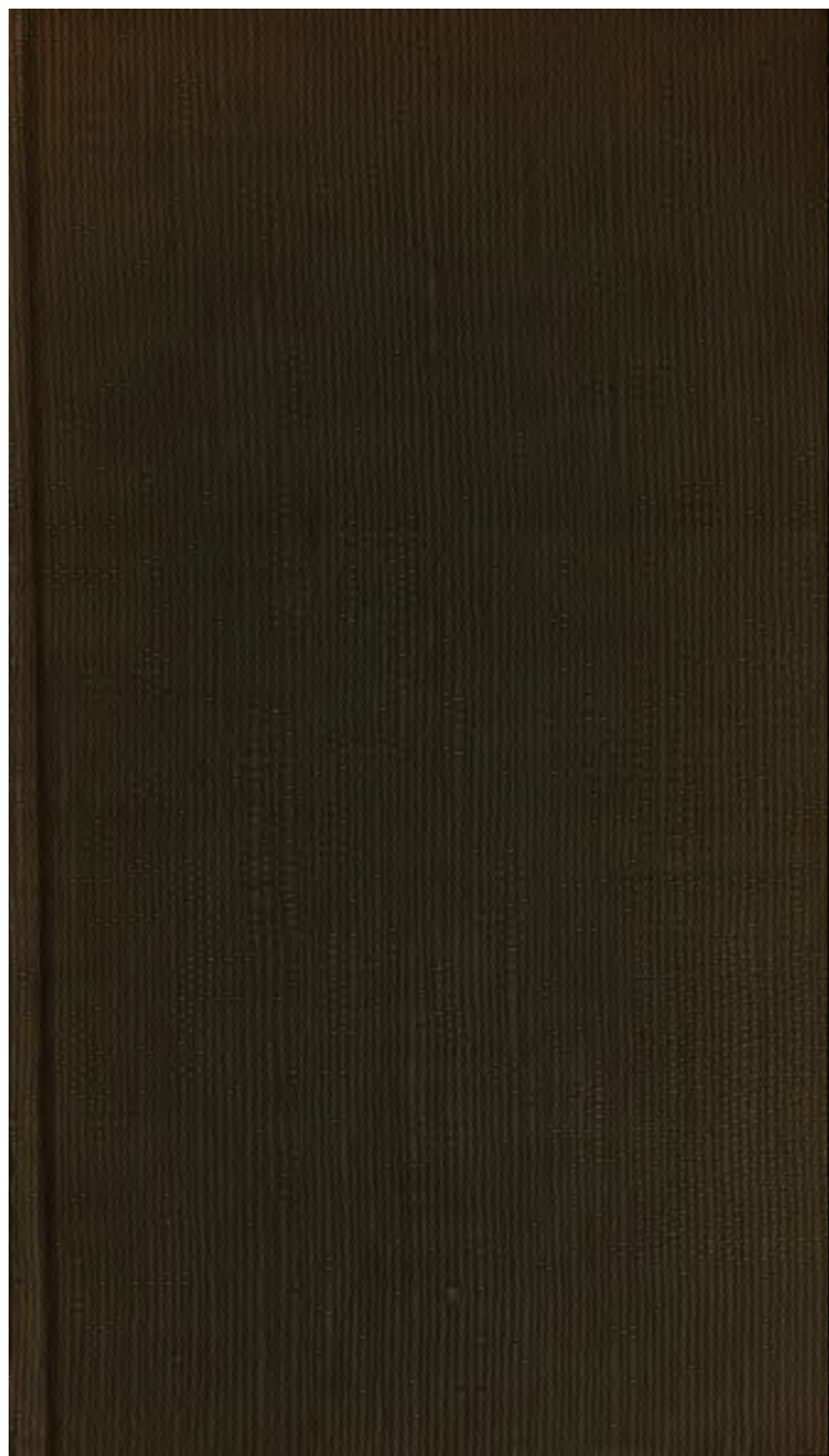
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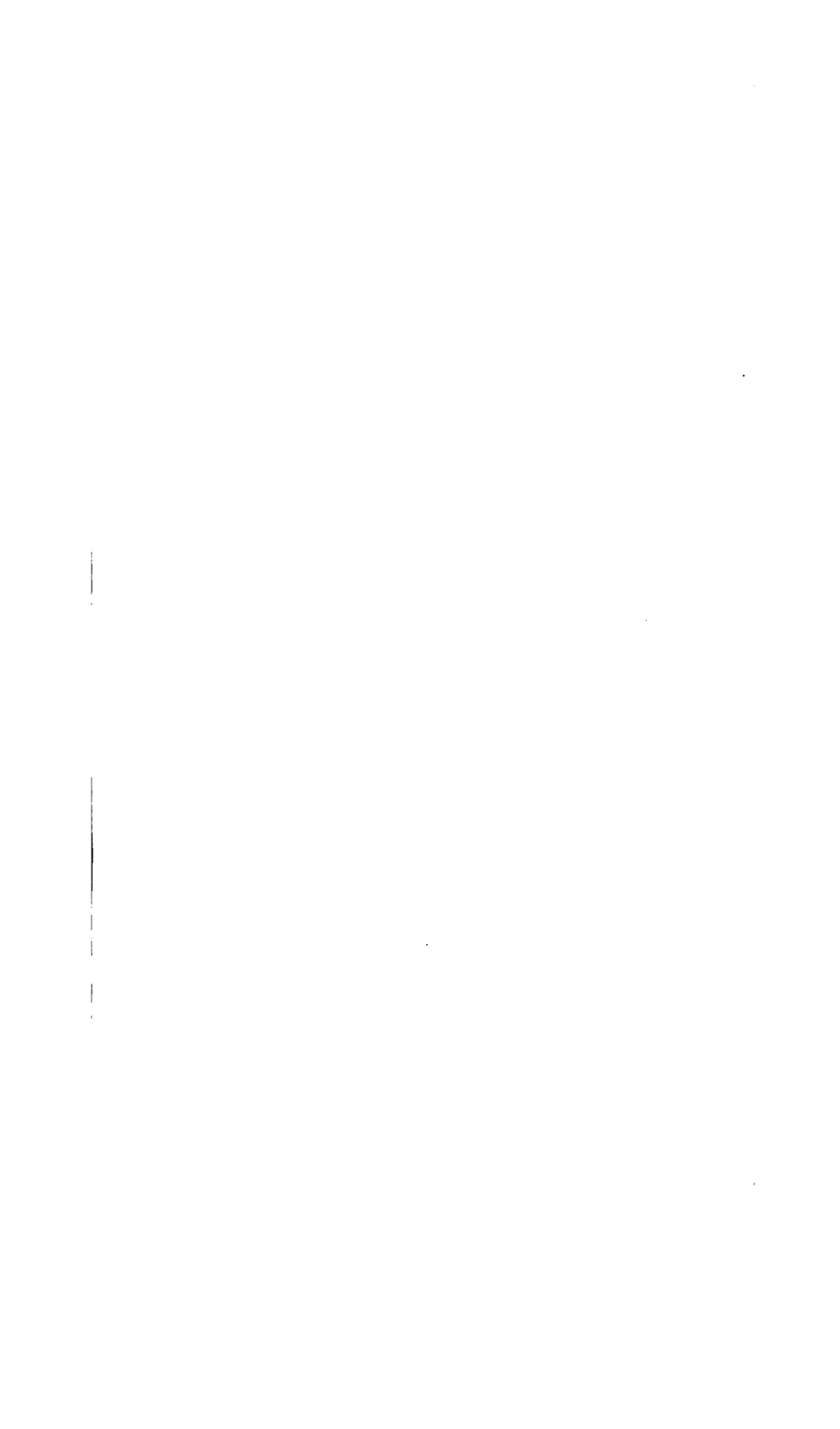
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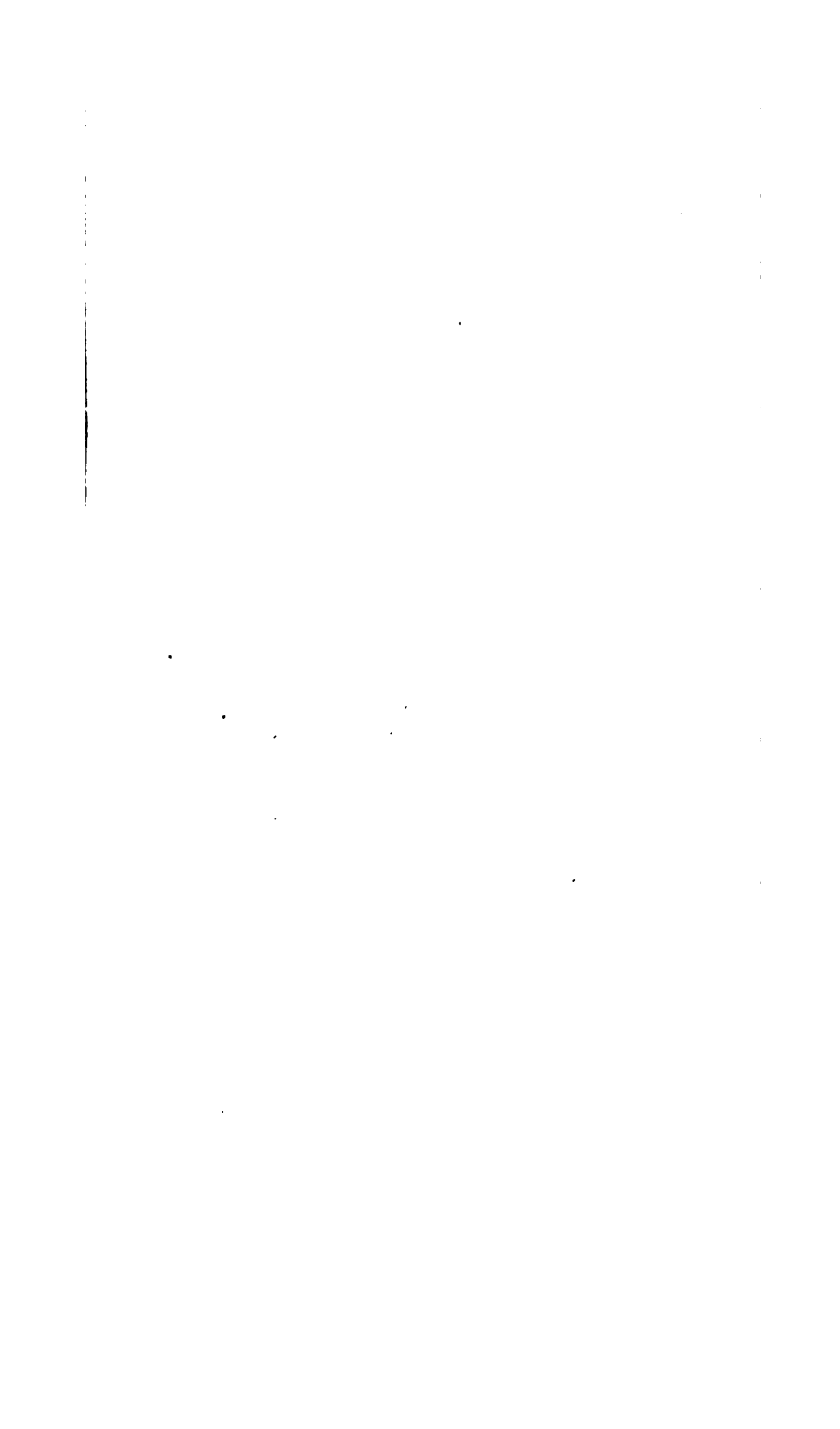
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Noctes Atticae,
OR
REVERIES IN A GARRET;
CONTAINING
SHORT, AND CHIEFLY ORIGINAL,
OBSERVATIONS
ON
MEN AND BOOKS.

BY PAUL PONDER, GENT.

"Nubes et inania captat."

Hor. A. P.

"I agree with Mr. Gray, 'that any man living may make a book worth reading, if he will but set down, with truth, what he has seen or heard; no matter whether the book is well written or not.'"—*Lord Orford's Letters to the Rev. Mr. Cole, vol. iv. p. 161.*

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ADVERTISEMENT.

If the following trifling Collection of Observations should encourage his youthful readers (to whom they are especially addressed) to ponder on what they read, and in order to impress them the more on their memories, to write down their Notices and recollected Observations on Men and Books, the Writer will feel amply remunerated for his pains and time.

N.B. Aulus Gellius, from whom he has taken the title to these volumes, very modestly informs his readers, that his essays were not written in Attica, and that he did not presume on his Attic wit. I have, gentle Reader, used the same caution in my titlepage, by translating Atticæ Attica or Garret.*

* See Beloe's Preface to the Translation.



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NOCTES ATTICÆ.

Anecdotes of Early Printing.

When printing first commenced, the most laborious part, the correction of proof sheets, was undertaken by persons conspicuous by their rank and erudition, and dignified by their stations, viz. cardinals, judges, and other eminent lawyers. The printers, in early editions, used to mark their books by some particular device, or a copy of verses, recommending the edition for its accuracy. In a volume with the title, the 'Pragmatic Sanction,' printed 1507, the following lines are printed in the end of the book, by Andrew Brocard, printer, Paris :

Stet liber hic, donec fluctus formica marinos
Ebibat, et totam testudo perambulet orbem.

IMITATED.

Till an ant shall drink up the whole sea,
Till a tortoise sha'll walk the earth round,
May this volume continue to be
For type and correctness renown'd.

Mélanges d' Histoire et de Littérature, à Rouen, MDVII.

Correctors of the Press.

The labours of these persons were likewise, in the early editions of books, commemorated by verses, which set forth the merit of these useful scholars. I find four rather boastful lines to this effect at the end of a volume, printed by Sextus Russingems, at Naples, 1472.

Sixtus hoc impressit, sed bis tamen ante revisit,
Egregius Doctor Petrus Oliverius.
At tu quisquis emis, lector studiose, libellum
Lætus emas, mendis nam caret istud opus.

IMITATED.

Sixtus the copies printed with much care,
Now twice revised by Dr. Oliviere.
The happy purchaser in vain shall look,
Yet find no error in this faultless book.

Melanges d'Histoire et de Literature.

Early Marriage.

This should prove a state most eligible, if we consider the early appearance of those passions which induce us to it. The reason why marriages are undertaken late in life is the condition of what is called refined society. Were men and women contented with the pleasures of domestic life, and did they look to home for happiness, which is to be found there only, the expenses of matrimony would

decrease. The wife, instead of being a new source of expense, would be really an help-mate, and the care in the education of children a pleasant employment to both parties. But the love of home is not a common passion, and most stare about the world and around them, as if happiness was to be sought in every other place but its real residence. A prudent and virtuous couple may exclaim, in the beautiful lines of the dramatic poet,

How near am I now to a happiness
 The earth exceeds not!
 The treasures of the deep are not so precious
 As are the conceal'd comforts of a man
 Lock'd up in woman's love; I scent the air
 Of blessings, when I come but near the house.
Middleton's Women Beware of Women.

Roughness of Manners.

Should any person of talents and acquirements put no restraint upon his vanity, and bring forth all his powers, whenever an opportunity occurred of shewing his parts and learning, he would, no doubt, appear a more able man than a modest person could possibly seem; yet he would gain the name, which Dr. Johnson bore, of being a "tremendous companion," and lose that of an amiable man and agreeable friend. Extreme vanity and selfishness will often despise the gentle character, and say,

like the tyrant, *oderint dum metuant*. Let them, however, be awed into gentleness by the scriptural account of Seth, whose hand was against every one, and every one's hand was against him.

*Accent and Syllabic Quantity distinguished
and illustrated.*

We compare *quantity* to musical tones, differing in long and short, as, upon whatever line they stand, a *semibreve* differs from a *minim*. We compare accent to musical tunes, differing in *high* and *low*, as *d* upon the third line differs from *g* upon the first, be its length the same, or be it longer or shorter.—*Harris's Philolog. Enquiries, vol. i. part 2, page 68.*

A Character.

Perhaps no description of a character exceeds, in nice discrimination, and the variety of particulars, the following portrait of Mason, the poet, by his friend Gray. "A good and well-meaning creature, but in simplicity a child: he reads little or nothing, writes in abundance, and that with a design to make a fortune by it, which does not, however, appear to have been the case. A little vain, but in so harmless and comical a way, that it does not offend; a little ambitious, but withal

so ignorant of the world and its ways, that this does not hurt him in one's opinion : so sincere and undisguised, that no mind with a single spark of generosity would ever think of hurting him, he lies so open to injury : but so indolent, that if he cannot overcome this habit, all his good qualities will signify nothing at all."—*Chalmers's Biographical Dictionary.*

The Art of Gardening.

Before the rules which now mark the general taste of laying out ground, and which exemplify the poet's saying,

"All art is nature to advantage dress'd ;"

the good sense and natural feelings of Mr. Addison thus discovered themselves : "I do not know whether I am singular in my opinion, but for my own part I would rather look upon a tree in all its luxuriancy and diffusion of boughs and branches, than when it is cut and trimmed into a mathematical figure ; and cannot but fancy, that an orchard in flower looks infinitely more delightful than all the little labyrinths of the most finished parterre." Notwithstanding this ample yet sportive declaration of his taste, the author of "An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste" ob-

serves, "this was a *bold scepticism* for so cautious a writer in that age." Surely this learned and ingenious 'inquirer' must have forgotten the sly and humorous mode of writing so peculiar to Addison, when he considered him as sceptical.

Pretty and Handsome.

These terms have been so jumbled in common conversation, that a doubt has sometimes arisen if they be not the same character of beauty: the classic mythology will illustrate this difference. Venus and Juno were opposite portraits: *Juno*, lofty in mien, and majestic in person: to *Venus* were given smiles the most winning and attractive. A pretty woman gains at first sight your tender affections, as a handsome woman by degrees commands your respect, for she often carries, with regularity of features, a sternness in them very incompatible with the more rapid attraction of sweetness and affability.

Popular State.

The insecurity of individuals, both with respect to life and property, in a state of popular government, is well described in the following extract. Speaking of the ill usage of some honest

great man by the people, Plutarch says, "this was the natural result of their new regained liberty; and the true character of a popular state, which is only a liberty for all persons to be slaves to the wild, arbitrary, and extravagant humours of a giddy, rash, and inconsistent multitude of fools, managed by a set of more cunning knaves."

Odd Men and their Keepers.

There are many characters, when *unattended*, who are troublesome by their arrogance and ill temper, and some other unsocial quality, to the society which they frequent: yet who in the presence of one individual change their conduct, and behave themselves properly and decorously. Such an one may be called Mr. Such-a-one's keeper, as when he is absent, this *ex parte* madman is very outrageous and ungovernable; at his approach the tumult of his passions is laid at rest. This keeper shall be, perhaps, by no means the other's superior in wit, wisdom, or courage; but yet shall have an influence that the odd man would wish to restrain, but cannot control. The submission may arise from a consciousness of our faults, &c. being known internally more to that person than to any other—

"So conscience does make cowards of us all."

Dirty Work.

Though many men contract dirty habits, and wear them long, yet are they very unwilling that the dirt should be seen on them. This custom is true of dirty habits, in a literal sense of the term. How often do we hear the expression used, and by way of recommendation, between prudent housewives! 'This is a nice-coloured gown, it will hide the dirt so well.' The slattern in one case, and the hypocrite in the other, does not consider that it is disreputable alike to suffer the dirt to attach itself to their habits, or to possess the artifice to conceal it.

The Harlot's cheek, beautied with plastering art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it. *Hamlet.*

A Critic's View of his Own Lot.

On the approaching death of a French critic, M. Barbier d'Aucour, some friend told him that he left an immortal name behind him. 'Alas!' said the critic, 'if my works should have any sort of value of themselves, I have been wrong in the choice of my subjects: I have dealt only in criticism, which never lasts long. For if the book criticised should fall into contempt, the criticism falls with it, since it is immediately seen to be

useless; and if, in spite of the criticism, the book stands its ground, then the criticism is equally forgotten, since it is immediately thought to be unjust! Yet,

'Tis hard to say, if greater want of skill
Appear in writing or in judging ill.

Pope.

Courtship.

It seems very singular that men should debase their personal characters by servility, at the very time in which they wish most particularly to recommend themselves. Yet such is the conduct of many interested lovers, and their mien, and gestures, and language, on these occasions, are unmanly, bombastical, and ridiculous, in the eyes of any sensible woman. Butler has most excellently quizzed these hyperbolical and mercenary orators, in the answer of the sage widow to Hudibras's epistle to her—

'Tis not those oriental pearls our teeth .
That you are so transported with,
But those we wear about our necks
Produce those amorous effects.
Nor is't those threads of gold, our hair,
The periwigs you make us wear ;
But those bright guineas in our chests,
That light the wildfire in your breasts,
These love-tricks I have been vers'd in so
That all their sly intrigues I know,
And can unriddle by their tones
Their mystic cabals and jargones.

Vanity.

This foible or rather mainspring of the mind is too much censured by the unthinking and fastidious. Much charitable exertions, many noble actions of valour, many eminent productions in literature, are the offspring of vanity. Indeed, without this motive to activity, many of the virtues of the heart, many of the faculties of the mind, would be lost in indolence or stagnate in apathy. The fop and the hero are actuated by the same principle, *i. e.* of being admired: the difference between them is the choice of the object which they pursue in their aim at eminence.

Abuse of Words.

Many persons, from want of education or reflection, make a very whimsical abuse of terms. When they see a building of odd and unusual appearance, or some singular piece of furniture, they say it is quite *gothic*. When they see a man of peculiar manners, and differing from all his neighbours, and wish to censure him, they call him a strange *genius*.

Shyness of Scholars in Company.

Some men, though well loaded with learning and intelligence, yet can never discharge their

head-pieces till they are well primed with a glass or two of the Falernian; and then they go off sharply enough. It is said that the celebrated author of the Spectator could not fire his joke, till he was charged with a bottle.

True Spirit of a Gentleman.

When a real gentleman is in company with his inferiors, he never shews by any part of his behaviour that he thinks them so; when in the presence of his superiors in birth, rank, or situation, he never betrays any feeling of his own inferiority: so he is at his ease with both, and so communicates it. Condescension, as it is very often exhibited, is insolence in disguise of manners.

Fits of Politeness.

There are many persons who are never polite or decorous, till some occasion suggests to them that you may gain a superiority over them by being rude. They then "draw up," as the phrase is, *look* very decorous, make ugly faces of seeming civility and suppressed indignation, and their distorted features and newly-adopted reserve cry loudly, "Pam, be civil." This is really "playing the knave," when they are within an "ace" of losing the game.

Satire ill-applied—Look at Home.

When certain *soi-disant* satirists shew themselves very ready to break their jests of "bitter flavour" on the lawyer, the physician, the military man, and the ecclesiastic, they should consider that if men were honest, temperate, peaceful in their homes, and pious in their practice, all these characters that provoke their censure would never have existed. "*Sublatâ causâ, tollitur effectus,*" is one of the indisputable axioms of the schools.

Anecdote of the Fourteenth Century.

In the year 1304, when Cardinal de Pruto was legate at Florence, among the other entertainments exhibited as a mark of the public joy, the inhabitants of St. Priano gave public notice that all who wanted to hear news from the other world should repair to the banks of the Arno on the first of May. Accordingly a scaffold was erected upon boats, and a representation given of hell, in which were introduced human figures dressed up like devils, and damned souls: this drew a multitude of spectators. From this spectacle Dante possibly formed the design of his *Comedia*: as Milton, it is said, did his *Paradise Lost*, from seeing Andreino's Fall of Adam represented at Milan; in which

singular representation, God the Father, angels, devils, the serpent, death, and the seven mortal sins, were brought upon the stage.—*Revolutions of Literature*, by Sig. Carlo Denina, London, March 1771.

A Ludicrous Story on the Same Subject.

The following story from Boccaccio evinces the amazing credulity of the vulgar as to intelligence from the other world, and shews, at the same time, the popularity of the Inferno. Whilst Dante resided at Verona, he one day, with a few friends, passed a door at which several ladies were sitting; one of them whispered to the rest, "Oh! there goes Dante, who travels to hell and returns when he pleases, fraught with tidings from below." 'True,' adds another, 'don't you likewise observe his crisp beard and complexion, browned by the infernal heat and smoke.'—*Ibid.*

Singular Revenge.

When Sir John Hill, the naturalist, was refused admittance into the Royal Society, he proceeded to compile a large quarto volume, entitled "A Review of the Works of the Royal Society;" in which, by the most unfair quotations, mutilations, and misrepresentations, numbers of

the papers read before that learned body are exposed and made ridiculous, by the title of 'Philosophical Transactions.' The work is prefaced with a most audacious dedication to Martin Folkes, esq; who was then president of that society.

Botany, and Anecdote of Linnæus.

It might be supposed that this science, of all others, should exempt the Professor from the influence of any evil passions; that he whose days were passed in pleasant woods, on airy hills, and in retired vallies, should mix with the blessings of health the privileges of peace and tranquillity. These would be the reflections of any who considered merely the nature of the study, apart from the disposition of the philosopher; but abstract reasoning on such a variegated being as man is often fallacious. It is a *report*, that Linnæus, in revenge to a man who had been an ungenerous rival to him when he practised physic, gave to some poisonous plant, and of bad odour, the name of his antagonist. A story similar is told of Dante, the Italian poet, who had placed an enemy in his 'Inferno,' who being a man of consequence complained to the Pope. His Holiness replied, "that if the poet had placed him only in purgatory, he could have given him relief; but hell was beyond his jurisdiction."

Boasting.

Though Montaigne does not quote his authority for the following anecdote, yet the goodness of the tale will rest safely on its own ground. Æsop was set to sale with two other slaves; the buyer asked the first, "What he could do?" who, to enhance his own value, promised mountains and miracles, saying he could do this and that, and I know not what. The second also boasted as much, if not more; and when it came to Æsop's turn, he was also asked, "What he could do?" 'Nothing,' said he, 'for these two have taken up all before, as they can do every thing.'—*Essays*, vol. iii. c. 2.

Well sings our immortal bard on this ticklish subject :—"For then we wound our modesty, and make foul the clearness of our deservings, when of ourselves we publish them."—*All's well that ends well*.

Ancient Freedom among Greeks and Romans.

Whoever will take the pains to investigate the laws of Greece and Rome in the antiquarian records that remain, will find how little liberty any individual among their states could boast of.

The enormous demands of Government upon the property of particulars, and the sumptuary laws that hampered the expenditure of what remained to each individual ; the dependency of judges upon their superiors, and their exposure to bribes, give us very sorry notions of the freedom of ancient nations, whatever boasting historians may vaunt of their code of civil laws, and the liberality of their principles of government. The English reader, with little pains, may consult the excellent treatises, Harwood's Grecian and Adams's Roman Antiquities, and cease to prattle about the freedom of ancient nations.

Influence of Weather.

Philosophers have disputed *pro* and *con* on the question, "whether a person is less able to read or write with or without effect, as the sun or the clouds have the ascendancy o'er this nether world?" Most men have felt the skyey influences, unless they possessed very strong constitutions, or very phlegmatic tempers. The reader or writer of works of fancy will doubtless find himself, in the various states of weather, under a different disposition to write or read. With respect to poets of uncommon powers, they may resemble

the Harps of Milton, and always be in tune ; but they were, as the poet says,

Spirits elect,
Their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung ! *Parad. Lost, b. 3, v. 365.*

Hints to Extemporary Politicians.

'Tis strange, says an eminent Greek writer, that those who desire to play upon the harp or upon the flute, or to ride the managed horse, should not think themselves worth notice without having practised under the best masters. While there are those, who aspire to the governing of the state, and can suppose themselves completely qualified, though it be without preparation or labour.—*Xenophon Memorab. 4, l. 2, s. 6.*

The Subject continued.

This Socratic mode of reasoning is very happily adopted by our immortal bard. When Rosenkrantz and Guildenstern wait upon Hamlet, he offers a *pipe*, and desires them to *play*: they reply they cannot. He repeats his request: they answer they have never learnt. Then he tells them with disdain, “ there is much music in this

little organ, and yet you cannot make it speak. Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe?"—*Hamlet, Act 3.*

Retort Courteous.

Even to the time of Cardinal Mazarin,* the presumptuous nonsense of astrology was still in a certain degree cultivated. When Mazarin was on his death-bed, and a comet happened to appear at that time, the flatterers who were about his bed, wishing to give the last specimen of their art, began very strongly to insinuate that this planet had a reference to his fate and person: the Cardinal, with the vivacity of a Frenchman, and the good sense of a philosopher, replied, "Gentlemen, the comet does me too much honour."

Sacred Poetry.

Dr. Johnson, in his life of Cowley, and in other places, speaks of the inability of the powers of poetry to add dignity to sacred subjects, in his observation on the 'Davideis' of that author. From the good sense of Johnson it is not safe to depart. A critic of equal eminence, and of not less erudition, has strongly confirmed the opinion of Johnson. "It is certain that every attempt to clothe the

* He died 1661.

sacred scriptures in verse will have the effect of misrepresenting and debasing the dignity of the original."—*T. Warton's History of English Poetry*, vol. ii. p. 172.

Painting: a True Anecdote.

Nothing happens, say the lawyers, which may not happen again. Dr. Smollet, in one of his novels, relates that a country gentleman hired an itinerant limner to place wigs on the heads of some of his ancestors painted by Vandyke. Now every one knew, save this unfortunate gentleman, that the heads of that painter are the finest specimens of his art. The writer of these lines was led by a farmer's wife to see her improvement in her portraits: she herself had actually put wigs on the heads of some of her ancestors! painted indeed, it is needless to add, by a very inferior artist to Sir Anthony.

Reformation in Parliament.

When this important matter is agitated by both parties, a wise and an honest man is quite embarrassed, not by the difficulty which the question may seem to hold out, but by a doubt founded on some facts, viz. whether either side is in earnest. An Aristocrat, and even a Lord Lieutenant of

the county, shall buy a borough ; yet he, and the electors who have sold their votes and liberty to the purchaser, shall be very forward in their cries for a reformation. Methinks that both parties would be great losers, unless they first reform themselves.

Modern Philosophers.

This was, in the days of yore, a term of good repute, and signified, in pure Greek, a lover of wisdom. At present it is a term that designates a foe to knowledge and long experience. Any fool or knave, (and they are often combined,) when he can gabble, in senseless declamation, against all the wisdom resulting from old and often repeated experiments, and utter general and wild systems of reformation without any plan of melioration ; such a man is called a philosopher, who in better times would have been called a fool, and in more learned times a dunce. Plato would have expelled him from his commonwealth ; Socrates would have quizzed him ; and Aristotle hampered him by a syllogism.

Rural Innocence

Is one of the popular "cants" which prose-men have most rashly imitated from the poets. A man of rhyme can decorate the inside of the cottage

with peace, and love, and innocence, as easily as he can weave the honeysuckle round its porch, and the creeper on its roof. But when prose-men, in spite of poverty, talk of love in a cottage; and in the face of low craft and lurking roguery, prate of rural innocence and tranquillity; we must think that the man of prose is meditating a flight beyond his powers and his province—plain truth. A village beau is as much a man of intrigue, as much of a “perfidious swain,” as a town dandy; and for other rural purities, the nearest justice will prove the most faithful and accurate recorder. Many lords of land may truly say, like Iago,

Others there are,
 Who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty,
 Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
 And, throwing but shews of service on their lords,
 Do well thrive by them; and when they have lin'd their coats,
 Do themselves homage, &c. *Othello, act 1, scene 1.*

Politics.

Whenever I shall perceive that the public interest shall prevail over private views; that is, when electors shall choose honest men in preference to rich candidates, when lords on both sides do not buy boroughs; and when any man of integrity and unbiassed judgment shall write the history of this fortunate æra; I shall attend to the

subject of Politics. When I find that people in power attend to the general good, instead of their places, I might "affect the studies of the state:" till then I must join the poet in his plaint—

"Half a patriot, half a coward grown,
"I fly from petty tyrants to the Throne."

A Literary Skylock.

Francis Philolphus, a learned Italian, was born in 1398 at Tolentino. His great reputation and success in literature did not satisfy the pride of scholarship: he wished to reign alone in the republic of letters. He would dispute on the most trivial subjects, and once wagered 160 crowns on some minute question in grammar against the beard of a Greek philosopher, named Timotheus. Having won, no solicitation could prevail on him to remit the fine, and he most unmercifully shaved his antagonist, in spite of very ample offers to redeem the beard, but nothing else could soothe his irritation against any contradiction.—*Chalmers's Dict.*

French Dramatists.

Many of the natural scenes in our Shakespeare would be a "caviar" to the French writers and critics. Their notions of dramatic representation are not according to simple nature, but to arti-

ficial manners. A character in a French play must be very decorous and sensible, or he is not dressed *comme il faut* to appear before a French audience. To these sentiments of our Gallic neighbours it may be said, in the language of the shrewd poet of Twickenham,

It may be reason, but it is not man.

The 'Superb,' a French Phrase.

This expression of manner, both in the work and composition, the ornaments of nature or art, is pleasing to the French, and means what *we* express by *shewy*; though *we* do not signify by it any thing connected with real taste. Lord Monboddo mentions an opinion of a Frenchman on the Commentaries of Julius Cæsar: "The subject matter," says the lively Gaul, "I highly approve, but had I written them, my style would have been very different." No doubt more superb, more shewy, more bombast, and more in the style of their friend, the author of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire;" and met with the same applause and—incredulity

The Force of Style.

It is shrewdly observed by Lord Monboddo, that Swift, in his romance of the Travels of

Gulliver, has, by assuming the simplicity of ancient historians in their narratives, given an air of probability and truth to his extravagant fictions; whilst, on the contrary, Gibbon, the historian, has adopted so fantastical a style, that the reader is inclined to suppose that he wrote to amuse and please his fancy, and to shew the wit of the writer, rather than to give any information of facts, or to elucidate any historical truth.

Ambition.

Whilst this passion to *shine* is anxious in fixing an entail of fame and eminence on her sons, how many are endeavouring to cut it off, or vitiate the title, and stigmatize the owner! The ambitious patriot has for an escutcheon of pretence the love of the public good, yet his private wish is a "Cap of Maintenance;" and the fee-simple of all he aims at is as much power, wealth, and rank, as he can attain.

Extra Love of Antiquity.

It may with truth be observed, that those who have lost themselves in the studies of antiquities seem to have dropt their connections with the world around them; and like ghosts to hover round

the tombs of their deceased friends, which they honour in proportion to the remoteness of their decease. Lord Monboddo, a great admirer of the ancients, has professed this taste of 'time-honoured' connections in the most ample and singular manner. Speaking of Greek and Latin Dictionaries, his Lordship says, "I reckon such dictionary makers, by whose industry we are enabled to live in the ancient world, one of the greatest blessings which we enjoy in this."

Certain Advantages of Reading.

Besides the more obvious recommendation of the use of books, one should be mentioned, which, though often omitted, is not the least important. Every man who is fond of reading has an escape from the follies and dulness of the world. If he be a man of business, his leisure hours must be improved by this habit; if he be what the French call "un desœuvré," his vacuities of time may be most agreeably filled up. The opulent dispose of their time by dint of opulence; others must do it by the force of their talents. An idle and a poor man must suffer evils, of which nothing but experience can convince him.

Second-Hand Jesters.

These utterers of other persons' "good things," and knowing them to be stolen, are surely, in the Court of Apollo at least, amenable to justice. To shew the hardened villany of such persons, it should be mentioned, that they even repeat their stolen jokes before the persons from whom they *borrowed* them. Now if these gentlemen had any means or intention of repaying these loans, something might be said in their favour, as all wits and authors are in some degree plagiarists; but a blockhead who steals must be a swindler, and builds a reputation upon false pretences.

Don Quixote.

This very ingenious romance is read by many persons as a tissue of strange stories represented in the character of the hero—a madman. Much of the merit of the work, and much entertainment to the reader, are lost by this method of perusing this very instructive fiction. At the time (A. D. 1547) Cervantes wrote, the spirit raised by the old Spanish romances of going in search of adventures, of storming castles to rescue distressed virgins, &c. was not laid by the improvements in society. To do this effectually, Cervantes exhi-

bited the ill consequences of reading these kind of writings, by describing the madness produced in the brain of his hero. With that peculiar degree of genius which marked Cervantes, the character of his insane hero is preserved from all disrespect, even in his most absurd actions, by the dignity of his moral character, by the splendour of his intellect, and the elegance of his attainments. Don Quixote is only mad in one point, his romantic chivalry.

Syllogisms.

This mode of investigating truth has its adversaries and its friends, as it happens with all kinds of ancient and recondite learning. The ingenious author of the "Sketches of the History of Man" has given the following degrading character of the attempt which syllogism makes

To catch the eel of science by the tail.

Pope.

"Aristotle's artificial mode of reasoning is no less superficial than intricate; for in none of his logical works is a single truth attempted to be proved by a syllogism, that requires a proof. The propositions which he undertakes to prove by syllogism, are of themselves self-evident. It is remarkable that Aristotle in his own works, viz. Ethics, Poetry, and Rhetoric, argues like a

rational being, without once putting in practice his own rules." *Non nostrum est tantas componere lites*, between the ingenious opinion of the author of the 'Sketches on the History of Man,' and the practice of one of our English Universities, wherein the Aristotelian logic is still held in esteem. The above-cited author has also wit on his side in his ridicule of the Aristotelian system :

He'd undertake to prove by force
Of argument, a man's no horse;
He'd prove a buzzard is no fowl,
And that a lord may be an owl,
A calf an alderman, a goose a justice,
And rooks committee men and trustees :
All this, by syllogism true,
In mode and figure, he would do. *Hud. canto 1.*

Fanaticism.

In the history of so accomplished and worthy a knight as Sir Philip Sidney has generally been represented, the reader is justly surprised at such an anecdote as the following. " He made a public confession of his faith to the clergyman who surrounded his bed, and, at his earnest request, accompanied him in a devout prayer dictated by himself; in this he remarked that his *sins were best known to himself*, and out of that *true sense* he was more properly instructed to apply to himself the eternal

sacrifice of our Saviour's passion and merits."* That is, in other words, I know the nature of my sins better than can be described and defined by any other persons, and in consequence of this knowledge, appreciate my claim for their forgiveness to the benefits of Christ's passion and merits.

Systems.

Men in the early stages of science are very fond of erecting systems, and this arises from that presumption which a knowledge of but *few* facts is apt to generate. When these experiences progressively increase, systems are then gradually relinquished. If we take up a few sticks, we can easily bind them into a faggot; when they are many and large, they easily elude our grasp, and we wisely contemplate them apart.

Proper Lights for individuals.

Some characters among our acquaintance are more advantageously seen at a distance, and by a partial view or drawing of them, and by not being placed in too strong a light. Some do best in busts, where their *heads* are only valuable. Three-

* See Life of Sir Philip Sidney in the British Plutarch by the Rev. Francis Wrangham, in six volumes, vol. ii. 1816.

quarter pieces are only fitted to those characters which we have experienced to have good hearts, as well as able heads. Few can stand at full length.

Biography.

The lovers of this enchanting branch of literature have to lament, that deficiency of matter has left us so few materials for the lives of the two most eminent men in their respective stations that ever the world could boast of, viz. Shakespeare and Newton. Who would not wish to peruse anecdotes of the private life and manners of the immortal bard, and who would not purchase at an high rate the literary progress of the immortal geometrician?

Case of many Readers.

How many men read a great deal, remember a very little, and perhaps understand even less! If they are loquacious, this last circumstance soon appears. How many men also are great eaters, bad or indifferent digesters, and remain as lean as if they had little employment for their powers of mastication. In one the brain, and in the other the stomach, is overloaded and void of digestive powers.

Swift said of Arbuthnot, that he was the only man of his acquaintance who possessed in any degree of perfection the two great and rare faculties, reading and walking. How many men hobble on a plain road, and grow tired in a short space; and how many readers stumble in clear passages, and are fatigued with very little attention to the author in hand!

Metaphysics.

“The disputes of metaphysicians somewhat resemble a game at blind-man’s buff. Every one is blinded in his turn, and the rest endeavour to drive him into some blunder; and should he stumble over a stool, or be brought to the light with his face blackened and his periwig in disorder, who can choose but laugh?”

The unknown but very ingenious author of the treatise from which this excellent account of metaphysical disputes is taken, has proved the justice of his account in his very shrewd ‘Essay on a Material World.’ In this game of blind man’s buff, Drs. Price and Priestley, and many Scotch writers, are exhibited by this facetious writer in the predicaments which he describes. The author of the Essay is sometimes a profound logician, sometimes a man of wit and pleasantry, and at all times a profound scholar and an elegant writer.

Dr. Samuel Johnson.

This modern Socrates gave most excellent lessons to his companions and the world, by exhibiting an example in his narratives of the duty incumbent on all to be as accurate as possible in all stories which they related. How many well-meaning persons, from a neglect of this golden rule, must appear to strangers to be liars ; when, in fact, a loose and inconsiderate mode of narrating has grown on them by early habit, so that they become not indeed rebels and traitors to truth, but are only guilty of misprision of truth, by not seeking after it diligently. Some writer says of these foolish talkers, that when their memories should furnish them with ready cash, they *drew* upon their imaginations.

“ Thinking for himself.”

This seems a phrase more used than understood, and as frequently abused in the same manner as liberty is. Thinking for one's self can only mean a power of deliberation under the guidance of reason, as liberty can only claim to itself the privileges granted by the laws of our country. NED is a dull fellow, and no very rigid moralist, but strenuously maintains that he

will think for himself. Of course, NED is continually involved in some misfortune or disgrace, from which the advice of more prudent and modest friends might easily have preserved him.

Modern Philosophy.

This term anciently expressed with modesty the love of wisdom; but in modern times, the word Philosophy means nothing less than modesty or a love of wisdom. To depreciate the experience of ages in political matters, and the venerable authority of time and tradition in religious matters, seems the office of modern philosophers. To substitute jargon of their own on the affairs of state, and a blind metaphysics instead of an active code of religion, is the common practice of these *soi-disant* sages. Among really wise men the only consolation to be obtained is from the hope that such theories cannot last, seeing the hardihood and the paucity of these sectaries. Few are rash enough to second their decrees. To use the simple and energetic phrase of the elder Pliny, "Credidit ita—sed nemo præter illum."

"Miseries of Human Life."

The author of this ingenious work has made a very fair joke of the minor inconveniences of life,

which a true grumbler calls by the hard name of human miseries, and which he places to the account of ill chances operating upon his untoward fate. Every wise and ingenuous man, who considers his own actions, will be forced to acknowledge, that the human miseries which have fallen to his lot have been too often of his own creating, and arising from his own fault. Such a man has put his property into the hands of an agent with whom he had no previous acquaintance; or has married a wife after a short courtship; or has trusted to the advice of flatterers or fools, whom he mistook for friends because they were often of his opinion, &c.

A wise Pope.

It is told of Pope Innocent VIII. that during his pontificate a book was published, vehemently arraigning the conduct of the Court of Rome. The Pope called a council of his Cardinals, and read to them some passages out of the author; adding these remarkable words, "This book speaks truth, therefore we ought immediately to reform ourselves, in order to make this fellow a liar."

Middle-aged Men.

When we are young, we fly from the grave pursuits and the dull converse of the aged; when in our turns we become the venerable personages, we are as apt to fly from the unmeaning noise and merriment of young persons. Middle-aged men are like jacks on both sides in a game, who are ready to join either party, and to take up the bat when either side is out. It is an observation of Cicero, that we should all, in early years, mix as much of youth as to be able to join the young with alacrity, and as much of the gravity of the old as to be companions to them also, when occasion calls on us.

Old Books.

The purchasers of these rare commodities, if they are not irreclaimable antiquaries, have little reason to defend their very unaccountable propensities to dust and book-worms. An author is either scarce, because in course of time the edition has been sold, and by neglect and accidents lost to the public, and no one has thought it worth while to reprint it; or because the edition was very expensive, and in the first place consisted of few copies. If mere antiquity and scarceness are the

grounds on which these very curious purchasers proceed, we might expect, provided they were well *gilt* and in *good condition*, they would seek their wives among the venerable and scarce specimens of ancient maidens and widows.

Good kind of Men

Are a race of people that no one blames and no one praises with any great degree of warmth. They act in life with much honesty and equity, yet they do not gain many very ardent friends. To use an expression of the painters, their manner is *hard*; when they do a kindness, they mar the pleasure which the receiver would otherwise experience, by an appearance of unkindness, and press your faults upon you, whenever they have an opportunity, with an air of superiority. Whilst the head acknowledges the excellent qualities of such persons, the heart hesitates on the compulsory homage. In our intercourse with men, we wish to love as well as reverence our friends, and do not like, in the words of Falstaff, to give "our reasons upon compulsion."

Verses of Eight Syllables

Seem the most convenient measure for subjects of light humour and gaiety, and most accommodated

to poets of minor poetic genius. These short verses do not often require epithets to fill up the canvass as in lines of ten feet. The late Mr. W. Mason was a strong instance of this truth: his poetry is much injured by the great multitude of his useless epithets; and his substantives are too feeble to dispense with epithets which serve as interpreters of the principal words in his lines. R. Lloyd laughs at these laborious versifiers,

“ Who exercise their toil and sweating,
“ To bring the *useful* epithet in.”

Lloyd, who confined himself to the eight feet measure, styles his muse a little *poney* which carried him round the foot of Parnassus; but alas! Mason was always trying to “ride the great horse.”

Legislators.

These practical philosophers should be well acquainted with human nature both in the abstract and in the concrete; and to understand not only what men ought to be, but what they really are. Swift and the late Marquis Condorcet would mislead a legislator by their very opposite statements of man's character. Whilst Swift debases his species by every mode of satire and abuse, and places them on a level with quadrupeds, he is no

safe guide to a legislator. When Condorcet boasts of leading men to ideal improvements and impossible *perfectibility*, his theories, however splendid, can produce no lessons of edification to the acute and steady lawgiver.

Fortune, a moderate one,

Acts like a gentle gale of wind at sea, and promotes pleasantly and safely our progress in our voyage, and keeps us moving. A large fortune resembles a squall at sea, and drives us down our passions with too much violence, or detains us amidst the variety of enjoyments like a vessel in a dead calm and under a heavy swell. Here every joy is lost; and sickness and wearisomeness render our very existence an insupportable burthen.

“ Will Fortune never come with both hands full,
 “ But write her fair words still in foulest letters?
 “ She either gives a stomach and no food;
 “ Such are the poor, in health : or else a feast,
 “ And takes away the stomach ; such the rich,
 “ That have abundance, and enjoy it not.”

Deaf and not Dumb.

No man is so formidable a companion as the deaf man who is talkative. If he is stupid also, he misapprehends and endeavours to reason upon

his own mistakes, and becomes angry at positions which he never heard distinctly. If such a man be a wit, he may amuse for a time, but we soon exclaim against his loquacity in the language of Horace,

Semper ego auditor tantum !

M. Fontenelle was deaf when he was chosen into the French Academy, and wrote on his entrance into that Society some ludicrous verses on his deafness, addressed to his new friends.

I am deaf, yet comfort I have some
When long harangues ensue;
Yet though I am deaf, I am not dumb,
So much the worse for you.

Parchment Writing.

The evil so incident to these kinds of MSS. and which so many poor clients do daily complain of, is described very minutely and humorously by Hudibras, in the account of Sidrophel and his office clerk Whaccum.

A paltry wretch he had half starv'd,
That him in place of Zany serv'd;
Hight Whaccum, bred to dash and draw
Not wine, but more unwholesome law.
To make 'twixt words and lines huge gaps
Wide as Meridians in maps;
To squander paper, and spare ink,
To cheat men of their words some think.

Elegant Illustrations.

An excellent writer and critic, praising those celebrated poets of rural scenery, such as Denham, Dyer, &c. for mixing a moral sentiment now and then in their descriptions, says, "the unexpected insertion of such reflections impart to us the same pleasure that we feel, when, in wandering through a wilderness or a grove, we suddenly should behold, in the turning of a walk, the statue of some muse or virtue."—*Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope.*

Of all the many enlogiums on the character of our inimitable bard, that of Addison is, perhaps, the most beautiful. "Shakespeare was indeed born with all the seeds of poetry; and may be compared to the stone in Pyrrhus's ring, which, as Pliny tells us, had the figure of Apollo and the nine Muses in the veins of it, produced by the spontaneous hand of nature without any help from art."—*Warton's edit. of Pope.*

Hudibras.

In this very lively and learned poem, the law supplies the poet with many allusions, similies, and comparisons. The author, having been an attorney's clerk in his youthful days, was, no doubt, disgusted with a view of the practice of his

employer, and has given us a most faithful description of the danger of going to law.

Others believe no voice to an organ
 So sweet as lawyer's in a bar gown ;
 Until with subtile cobweb cheats,
 They're catch'd in knotted law, like nets
 In which, when once they are embrangled,
 The more they stir, the more they're tangled ;
 And while their *purses* can dispute,
 There's no end of the immortal suit.

Agriculture.

It would be very advantageous to the public, as well as to individuals, if at the Universities or the Royal Institutions, or at the Society of Arts, a lectureship on Agriculture was established ; and that it should be as practical as the nature of a lecture would admit. Such instruction would benefit the country landlord, especially the man of moderate possessions, as it would enable him to manage his own property ; and would, at the same time, be of incalculable advantage to the country at large, by rescuing the land from the hands of the minor race of dishonest and ignorant tenants. No persons can injure a country more than poor and ignorant farmers, who often enter on their occupation, without any qualification to carry it on with credit or profit to themselves or their landlords, on whom they readily lay the fault of their want of success, generally charging them with

too high rents; when, in many instances, want of sobriety and industry, and, in the first place, a deficiency of property for the undertaking, have been progressively the causes of their insolvency and final ruin.

Laconism.

Though loquacity and the use of superfluous words are certainly irksome, yet it may be doubtful whether the short mode of expression adopted by proud and reserved persons be not more disgusting. Tacitus, speaking of Galba, styles his mode of speaking "*brevitas imperatoria*." This haughty brevity distinguished the Spartan answers to foreign ambassadors. Epaminondas, after the battle of Leuctra, spoke gaily and wittily of his defeat of the Spartans: "I have taught them," says that admirable hero, "to lengthen their monosyllables."

Pretended Piety.

It is a grievous consideration to a reflecting mind how easily the pretence to piety is made a mask for a villain to act under, and that every moral principle is trampled upon in this masquerade of rogues. The greatest tyrant and the most profligate man that ever sat on the throne of this kingdom assumed the title of 'Defender of the Faith, and so forth.' Milton says finely of

hypocrisy, and its baneful influence in life by the darkness of its councils,

So spake the false dissembler unperceived,
For neither man nor angel can discern
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
Invisible, except to God alone.

Coxcombs in Morals.

Fops abuse the purport of plain and useful clothing by fantastical forms and superfluous ornaments, that raise the finger of scorn and contempt. In the same degree coxcombs in morals, or sentimentalists as they are called, overload and impede the practical and straight-forward duties and offices of life by refinements in their modes of thinking ; so that a plain man is scared by their apparent difficulties. Nor indeed is his apprehension of these impediments without foundation, as he finds a sentimentalist himself is the last to *put them into practice.*

A Leveller in the Church.

The late Bishop of Llandaff, Dr. Watson, had the smallest episcopal revenue of any of his brother prelates, and wrote with much zeal on a scheme of equalizing the revenues of Bishops. Had he been the Archbishop of Canterbury, and had made the same proposition, we should have been more

amazed at his extraordinary specimen of self-biography, in which folly, vanity, and some other qualities of mind, which the candid reader is willing to suppress, appear in the full effulgence of unrestrained and unqualified ostentation.—See *Boswell's Life of Johnson*.

Advantages of the Press.

When we read of the extreme ignorance of former ages, reaching even to the 14th century, attended with horrid crimes and enormous vices, we cannot help exclaiming, in the language of the philosophical poet,

Qua procul a nobis flectat fortuna gubernans.—*Lucretius*.

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houses of our ancestors consisted of very many and some roomy mansions, not only to receive the tenants occasionally, but because they lodged the dowagers, old aunts, and all other unendowed parts of the family then resident, and who required separate apartments. In modern times, large edifices are only built by pride and ostentation, and remain as useless as the pyramids of Egypt, and bring profit alone to the builders; whilst the owners of these huge incumbrances are glad to find smaller, but more convenient, houses in another distant county—

“And leave state-rooms to strangers and to duns.”

Labours of Hercules exceeded.

These, if my memory fails me not, were chiefly, if not all, bodily; but in more refined ages, the labours of the mind are more remarked! What a modern Hercules is a Tutor in a private family; the lion father of his pupil must be overcome, and the dragon mother kept in subjection. Another modern Hercules is a Schoolmaster. What a Hydra with innumerable heads has he to subdue! What a constitution should he possess to be adequate to his daily toils of mind! What patience to persevere in his irksome employment! At the end of all these labours, he may also meet with the usual gratitude of mankind, for benefits so painfully

conferred on them ; and he has a just cause to utter the complaints of all benefactors of mankind :

- " All human virtue, to its latest breath,
- " Finds envy never conquer'd but by death :
- " The great Alcides, every labour past,
- " Had still his monster to subdue at last."

Conversational Poets.

Horace and Martial in Latin, and Butler in his *Hudibras*, perhaps, of all poets, ancient and modern, supply more lines applicable to the common purposes and occurrences of life, than any others. Much excellent observation on moral subjects may, indeed, be quoted from Boileau and Pope; but not in such quantities, or so obvious, as in Martial and in *Hudibras*. King Charles II. and his whole court could quote passages from Butler, and their reading was not, perhaps, very extensive ; though Martial might also be a favourite among them, on account of passages not very honourable either to the author, or his admirers in that licentious court. However, in Martial there are some very moral and philosophical specimens of the writer's genius : the verses on what constitutes happiness are very excellent, the initial lines will bring the whole to the recollection of every scholar.

Vitam quæ faciant beatiozem,
 Jucundissime Martialis, hæc sunt
 Res non parva labore sed relicta,
 Non ingratus ager, &c.

Lib. 10, Epig. 47.

O si sic omnia!—N.B. An edition of Martial, with proper selected passages, is much wanted.

M. Rousseau.

When this ingenious but fantastic writer endeavoured to prove the superiority of savage over civilized man, he exhibited, by his own example and manners, the falsehood of his system. He wishes to prove that savage man is more happy and content than a civilized one; yet the writer himself was “*un grand sauvage par son temperament;*” and no man felt less content and happiness. When he tried to cry down the Arts, as corrupting the human mind, he was gaining his subsistence by copying music, and cultivated that fascinating art with all possible assiduity and delight: so far is the practice of a *soi-disant* philosopher removed from his theory!

Account of Savage Nations and Customs.

M. Buffon has thrown out an observation on the relation by travellers of these subjects, well worthy of our regard. “These authors who have recorded the customs of savage nations have not been aware that they only described the actions of individuals, directed by caprice or selfishness. Some nations, say they, eat their enemies whom

they take prisoners; others burn or maim them. Some nations expose their old parents, or kill them: some eat their children," &c. Now, in barbarous nations, no settled manners or customs, no more than established laws, prevail; and therefore these enormous practices cannot be the conduct of the whole of any one nation so described as barbarous, and therefore under no general rules or established customs.—*Genie de M. Buffon*, 12mo.

Schools of Virtue, Good Manners, and Religion.

Till the time of Queen Elizabeth, and further "till the days of chivalry were gone by," the mansions of the nobility were the asylums of poor gentlemen's sons, and the schools of younger nobles; where arts and arms, and honourable lessons in war and peace, were taught them under the eyes of their august masters. It is related of Archbishop Sheldon, who lived in the reign of Charles I. that his house was frequented by many young persons of high rank, that they might reap the advantages of his learned and pious conversation. The Bishop's discourse to his pupils was, "Do well and rejoice: let it be your principal care to become honest men, and afterwards be as devout and religious as you will. No

amazed at his extraordinary specimen of self-biography, in which folly, vanity, and some other qualities of mind, which the candid reader is willing to suppress, appear in the full effulgence of unrestrained and unqualified ostentation.—*See Boswell's Life of Johnson.*

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which they are constructed. Whoever has seen the area at Chester, on which the very Attic structures of the Jails, Law Courts, and Military buildings, are erected, must admire the elegance of the architecture of the various edifices, yet must lament, that, from the disproportionate amplitude of the ground on which they stand, the different buildings exhibit a very mean appearance from their seeming minuteness.

On Study of Antiquities.

Much false wit and unjust strictures have been made on lovers of the olden time, as if they were all alike nugatory and tiresome. Many antiquaries have proved men of great sense and ingenuity. Let two modern ones plead the cause of antiquarianism,—the poets Gray and T. Warton. Cervantes has well described foolish and useless researches into antiquity: "Say no more, Sir," says Sancho, "for in good faith if I fall to questioning and answering, I shall not have done between this and to-morrow morning; for foolish questions and ridiculous answers I need not be obliged to any of my neighbours." 'Sancho,' quoth Don Quixote, 'you have said more than you are aware of; for some there are who tire themselves with examining into and explaining

things, which after they are known and explained, signify not a farthing to the *understanding* or *memory*.'

A Beautiful Description of a Virtuous Woman.

Cervantes rises with his subject, and his hero in his lucid intervals very finely exhibits his sentiments. 'The beautiful and honourable woman,' says Don Quixote, 'whose husband is poor, deserves to be crowned with laurels, and palms of victory and triumph. Beauty, of itself alone, attracts the inclinations of all that behold it, and the royal eagles and other towering birds stoop to the tempting lure. But if such beauty be attended with poverty and a narrow fortune, it is besieged by kites, vultures, and other birds of prey: and she who stands firm against so many attacks, may well be called 'the crown of her husband.'

Modesty to Poets recommended.

Don Quixote, addressing a young poet, (whom he had in vain exhorted to take up the profession of knight-errantry,) says, "I content myself, then, with putting your worship in the way of becoming a famous poet; and that is, by following the opinion and judgment of other men rather than your own. For no fathers or mothers think their own children ugly; and this self-deceit is yet stronger with respect to the offspring of the mind."

Flattery.

"Be pleased, Sir, to repeat some other efforts in the greater kinds of poetry, (says Don Quixote to the young student,) for I would thoroughly feel the pulse of your admirable genius." 'Is it not (exclaims here the author) excellent that Don Lorenzo should be delighted to hear himself praised by Don Quixote, whom he looked upon as a madman? O force of flattery, how far dost thou extend, and how wide are the bounds of thy pleasing jurisdiction!' Cervantes seems here to be apprehensive lest some critics might accuse him of ascribing *uncommon* folly to the student Don Lorenzo.

Abuse of Words.

Words are certainly the sport of fancy and wayward intellects, if they are what the learned Wollaston defines them to be—

Words are (so Wollaston defines)
Of our ideas merely signs.

Lloyd's Fable of the Fawn and Satyr.

And much sport is made of them, and much controversy excited by their use and abuse. Lawyers multiply them beyond any possibility of ideas having signs for them; punsters play at battle-dore and shuttle-cock with them; logicians put

them into fetters; rhetoricians dress them up as gaily as chimney-sweepers of May-day; and lastly, grave commentators torture and murder them,

From alashing Bentley down to piddling Theobalda. *Pope.*

A Polite Commentator.

We are surprised, in reasoning *à priori*, that persons conversant with writers eminent for their polished diction and liberal thought should not acquire something of these properties from their favourite authors. A French critic, on reading M. d'Ablancourt's translation of Plutarch, and finding it done with more elegance than fidelity, used to call it *un galant homme*, the *faithless Charmer*.

The Difference between Mathematical and Moral Reasoning.

Though the distinction in the mental operation of these sciences may be manifest to those who have deeply considered their different subjects, yet a *familiar* illustration of it may suit many readers. The student in mathematics is like the learner on the harpsicord; he sits down to an instrument whose tones are made ready to his hand. The student in the science of morals is like a young artist on the violin; he must make his own notes, and play

them too. No wonder, then, that many moral philosophers now and then slur their theories, or are out of tune in playing them.

Geometry.

It is a remarkable yet very true observation of Quintilian, lib. i. Institut. cap. 13, on the study of geometry, "The use of this science commences long before the student is quite master of it. In acquiring it, the scholar finds his faculty of reflecting kept in continual exercise, and his habits of attention continually rendered more steady and fixed." This last recommendation of this science should not be passed over, as the habit of attention is the most difficult of all our intellectual faculties to be acquired. It is the mother of memory, and the best nurse of intellect. Without this useful assistant, all toil fails of its end.

Tone and Action.

Much has been written upon the gesticulation of orators in Greece and Rome, and we hear frequently of "action, action," as the most essential parts of ancient eloquence; but the effects of tone and gesture are more plainly described by the following anecdote in Plutarch: "A certain man called upon Demosthenes, and related at large what blows, &c. he had received from his anta-

gonist, 'Sure,' said the orator coolly, 'thou hast received nothing of all these things thou complainest of.' Upon which, the man, straining his voice, and crying out aloud, 'How, Demosthenes, have I suffered nothing?' 'Ah! now,' replied the orator, 'I hear the voice of one who has been beaten and injured.' "

On his first entrance at the bar, Cicero had taken lessons of tone and action from Æsop the player, who was remarkable for the violence of his gesture. In the character of Atreus, meditating revenge on Thyestes, he was so transported, that with his truncheon he smote a servant hastily crossing the stage, and laid him dead at his feet. In his latter days Cicero blamed all violent action, and deriding the speakers of his time for being so noisy in their utterance, said it was want of ability to speak that made them bawl; as lame men, who cannot walk, get on horseback.

History.

Till an historian can be found, who has not conceived prejudices in favour of one particular form of government; who is not influenced by peculiar opinions in philosophy or religion; who writes under no bookseller or other patron, or for love of lucre or fame; little heed can be given to the pages of history. Truth is not to be sought in the

eloquence of Gibbon and Raynal, or to be expected in the sarcastic wit of Voltaire, or in the acute but see-saw opinions of Hume. He who writes with any motive but that of the love of truth, belies his office; misleads his readers; disgraces his talents; and subjects himself to the sarcasm on the Greek historians,

Quod Græcia mendax

Audet in historia.

Horat.

An obscure Sentence in the Greek Language.

It was a Greek saying, that no man could be accounted happy till his death. The plain construction of this would be, that only death was his happy state; but that this cannot be the meaning is obvious, as no happiness can be ascribed to a state of non-existence. The saying may be explained by considering human life as a sum composed of many evils and many pleasures. Now the balance could not be cast, till the articles of the account had been closed by death, the end of all accounts.

A Legal Sentiment obscurely expressed.

When it is said in common parlance that the jury are judges of the law as well as of the fact, a man who trusts to grammatical phraseology as his interpreter of ideas conveyed by words,

is at a loss for the meaning. He knows that the practice is, that the jury find the fact, and the judges apply the law to the fact, and thereby declare what is the penalty; but how can we suppose for a moment, that jurymen know any thing of the law, as applied to many crimes and misdemeanours. The law is pronounced from the mouth of the judge, when he and the jury fully comprehend the state of the evidences which constitute the truth of the facts. Every juror on his oath is enjoined 'well and truly to try the issue joined between the parties, and a true verdict to give according to the evidence.' Here, neither by words or implication, is a juror a judge of law, but only of the fact.—N.B. See Wynne's Dialogues.

Obligations.

Tacitus the historian, with his usual severity, says, benefits are so far agreeable as we think it in our power to return them; when they exceed that point, instead of being thankful, we feel a dislike to our benefactors. Seneca says, with his peculiar mode of expression, a small sum borrowed makes a man a debtor; a large renders him an enemy to the creditor. Modern ethics are more liberal on the score of obligations; and Milton thought such sentiments only becoming the mouth of Satan—

Nor was his service hard,
 What could be less than to afford him praise,
 The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
 How due! Yet all this good prov'd ill in me,
 And wrought but malice; lifted up so high
 I 'adain'd subjection, and thought one step higher
 Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
 The debt immense of endless gratitude.

Parentheses.

The introduction of parentheses into any form of composition is both improper and unscholar-like; for it is a proof that the writer is not conversant with the art of good writing, or that he writes in a hurry. Unlettered men, and those who are accustomed to speak with little thinking and with much haste, fall into this error. The nominative case, the verb, and its government, will always make a plain and intelligible sentence, and admits of such infinite changes that there seems no necessity for these entanglements of speech. My Lord Clarendon's History is full of them; and they render his composition, with all the good and grand sense of the author, embarrassing. A man before he pretends to be a writer should be a grammarian, and not subject himself, by an obscure or harsh style, to the old sarcasm, "*Nomine grammaticus re barbarus.*"

Visiting.

In these temporary communications with our friends, we may from fastidiousness think too much attention is paid to us, so as to infringe upon our own habits and whims; but this is often mere coquetry; for we should really be hurt and vexed in our feelings, should our host leave us too much to ourselves, and pursue coolly and perseveringly his own business and amusement. We should be apt to exclaim, I wish I had visited my friend more at his leisure, or that he had told me, before, he was engaged in such an undertaking, and then I should have staid at my own house, and really "made myself at home."

Placing of Books.

In many German and Spanish volumes, we may observe that the titles of them are placed longwise at the back of the volume, and not perpendicularly as in modern usage. This ancient custom prevails in books bound in vellum and parchment. This mode was, of course, previous to putting in our libraries the volumes upright; laid on their broad sides, though not so sightly, perhaps, they are yet more safely placed, and more convenient for occasional removal. The upright has quite a military appearance, and seems invented first in the study of some brigadier-general.

The Stoics and Epicureans.

These philosophers have been much misrepresented by *soi-disant* scholars, and by those who wished to say a witty rather than wise thing. *Epictetus*, if diligently perused, would fully justify the good sense of the Stoics from the joke of Swift, who, assuming their doctrine that the passions should be *totally* suppressed, to prevent the evils consequent on their indulgence, exclaims, "This is cutting off one's legs to avoid the expense of wearing shoes." The severity of the Stoics frequently degenerated into cynicism, and the abuse of Epicurus who taught doctrines little different from their founder Zeno. Brucher, who was an erudite and very sober and diligent writer, has collected the doctrines of Epicurus, which no one can disapprove in a pagan philosopher. But his physical and theological opinions few men would attempt to recommend in any age. A little French volume of the Theory of agreeable Sensations* seems to have founded its doctrines on the original and purer tenets of the Epicurean sect.

Taste.

This word, which is a metaphor taken from corporeal appetites, and applied to an intellectual

* A Geneve, 1747, by M. Pouilly de Champeaux.

faculty, has found its opponents among nice critics in terms, and perhaps their aversion is not without good grounds. Should we say a man has a genius for eating, and a good taste in literary composition, the critic would cry out against us, as using an improper metaphor, and degrading genius by its employment, and elevating taste beyond its due reputation. Yet the French have their *goût*: the Italians their *gusto*. We say that at certain times we find a relish in books, and in our viands. This kitchen trope is placed so deeply in the soil of most languages, that it cannot easily be eradicated. The metaphor, however, may be made useful, if we consider that taste, both intellectual and corporeal, depends much on the healthful state of the faculties of each, and that delicacy for a moral truth or wholesome dish is owing to the sound state of the organs which are employed in its gratification. A glutton and a profligate man has no taste for an elegant author, or a delicate viand.

Singular Aids to Composition.

It has been related that whilst M. Crebillon, the elder, was writing his tragedy of Cataline, he kept four ravens round his table, which he called his *conspirators*. Dr. Young, when composing his "Night Thoughts," ordered his study to be hung

with black cloth, placed a skull on the table, and bid his clerk toll the bell at one o'clock in the morning; when having written the following lines, he repeated them in unison to the music of the church tower—

The bell strikes one,—we take no note of time
But from its loss; to give it then a tongue,
Is wise in man; as if an angel spoke,
I *feel* the solemn sound, &c.

Burying in Churches.

So early as the times of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors, this abominable practice was complained of, as hurtful to the services of the church. The inconveniences of this ancient practice were so sensibly felt, that several canons were made against it, with an exception in favour of priests, or saints, or such as *paid very well* for that privilege. It is a pity that Parliament does not issue a law to prevent all such privileges, and that the dead be suffered no longer to infect the living. On the Continent such legal preventions are made.

Anglo-Saxon Ladies.

In the ninth century, there seem to have been ladies of as fashionable a turn of mind as in the nineteenth century. Pope Gregory, in a letter to St. Augustin, the apostle of the English, says, "A certain *wicked* custom has arisen among

married people, that some ladies refuse to nurse the children whom they have brought forth, but deliver them to other women to be nursed.”—*Henry's History of Great-Britain*, 8vo. v. iv. p. 351.

Singular Custom.

In Charles the Second's reign, at the plays then acted from Beaumont and Fletcher, and by the writers of that age, the Ladies, to hide their blushes, wore masks, which at the same time betrayed their shame and consciousness of the impropriety of their attendance on these licentious performances. This absurdity did not escape Pope; when

The fair sat panting at a courtier's play,
And not a mask went *unimprov'd* away.

The irony is sufficiently plain and bitter. This expedient of the mask is no less uncleanly than the oeconomy of the housewife, who wears dark gowns to hide the dirt she is too lazy to remove.

What are a Philosopher's Goods and Chattels.

When Demetrius besieged Megara, he was desirous of seeing Stilpon who lived near that city, in great reputation for his retired and contemplative life. “Stilpon,” said Demetrius, “I hope that you have received no ill usage, nor lost any

of your goods by my soldiers?" 'My Lord,' replied the Philosopher, with a smile of complacency, 'I have not met with any of them who have thought knowledge or virtue so valuable as to plunder them from me.'—*Plutarch's Life of Demetrius, the son of Antigonus.*

Bon Mot of the same Stilpon.

In spite of the great attention paid to Stilpon by Demetrius, his soldiers, like some modern ones, under the promise of giving liberty to the cities which they invaded, and intent on all kinds of plunder, robbed the poor philosopher of the only slave he had. On a subsequent interview, Demetrius shewed his usual marks of friendship to Stilpon, and observed, "Well, Stilpon, I leave your city in perfect liberty and freedom." 'True, my Lord,' said the Philosopher somewhat briskly, 'for you have left us not so much as *one slave* among us.'* — *Ibid.*

Anecdote of ancient Gallantry and Politeness.

When the Athenians, in their war with Philip king of Macedon, had intercepted an express sent from the king, they opened all the letters found

* It may perhaps be necessary to the English reader, to observe, that among the ancient Greeks and Romans, the great lovers of liberty, slaves were considered as property, and of course transferable.

on the messenger, excepting only those which were directed to his queen Olympia, which they sent carefully and unbroken to the queen.—*Ibid.*

Beauty.

How very widely men differ in their description of female charms. In the points of other animals, men are decisive, as in the horse, the cow, &c. but of the beauty of a woman there are so many various opinions, that something besides external form must generate this difference. The French phrase, if it does not decide the question of what woman shall be called beautiful, explains, at least, the difficulty of it: the "*Je ne sçais quoi*," and the Celia altogether of the English poet, must content us, unless we join the sentimentalist, and attribute our choice to the more or less discovery of the amiable, &c. that we think we alone can perceive in the features, air, gesture, &c. of the beloved object. Shall we settle this question by the opinion of a very amorous Bard--

There's no such thing as what we beauty call,
It is mere cozenage all.
For though some long ago
Like certain colours mingled so and so,
That doth not tie me now from choosing new;
If I fancy take
To black and blue,
That Fancy doeth it beauty make.

Sir John Suckling's Poems.

Different Faculties and Pursuits.

It seems at first difficult to account how three very eminent Architects in the Palladian taste should have failed so egregiously in their attempts in Gothic architecture. Inigo Jones, Sir C. Wren, and the late ingenious Mr. James Wyatt, have left most eminent proofs of their skill in buildings, worthy of Greeks and Romans; but in Gothic structures they have betrayed most gross ignorance or inattention. Inigo Jones erected a Grecian portico to old St. Paul's, and a Grecian skreen in Winchester cathedral. Sir C. Wren's additional towers to Westminster Abbey are sorry proofs of his ignorance of gothic beauty and grandeur. His cupola on the portal of Christchurch college great quadrangle is neither Gothic, nor Grecian, nor Arabesque. The repairs in Hereford Cathedral, and the restoration of many parts of the chapel of New College, Oxford, will convey to posterity no advantageous opinion of Mr. J. Wyatt's taste or skill in Gothic ornaments.

So wide is art, so narrow human wit.

Pope.

Platonic Love.

This great philosopher has been censured by those who never read him; for platonic love is the joke of every one who assumes the character of

a wit. But let a plain translation of what the philosopher says on this popular subject put down these idle babblers. "The vulgar notion of love is disgraceful to manhood, which prefers a woman for her bodily, rather than her mental virtues." This surely excludes not an attachment to female charms as part of love, but only points it out as an *inferior* motive of choice.

Composition in Music.

To shew the difficulties in putting words of meaning to music, we must be aware how often the lines, if properly pronounced, would impede the tune; and, on the contrary, the tune does not permit a good reader to utter the words as the *sense* directs the use of the accents. Many musical persons think that sense has little to do with tunes, as many *bon vivants* think that conversation stops the bottle, and with equal justice perhaps in both cases.

Self-Biography.

The least experienced part of mankind hesitates to give credit to a man's own account of himself, at least without the security of an oath. There are two impediments to our confidence in the truth of these self-created narratives, and very

opposite in appearance, viz. the desire of speaking too well or too ill of themselves. David Hume and his friend J. J. Rousseau speak of themselves as no one else would wish to be spoken of; and Gibbon is too much in *alto*, when he narrates his actions or his literary pursuits. Voltaire was known to be a knave, and of course his account of himself cannot do away the general impression. Perhaps we must despair of self-biography, till a virtuous as well as able man shall have laid aside the delicacy, with that modesty and just feeling of imperfections, attendant on real merit. Sir Isaac Newton left to posterity alone the care of his fame.

Useless Advice.

When old persons tell young ones of the vanity and nonsense of the world, they remind us of folks who have shewn themselves very curious to look into a raree-show, and on quitting the box they affect to cry out 'all nonsense;' or on laying down a newspaper which they have been conning for some hours, answer to the question, What news, Sir? 'None at all, Sir.' Young persons will still be curious, and shew in their turn that

Gay hope is theirs by fancy fed,
Least pleasing when possess'd.

Gray's View of Eton College.

Idleness.

Against this evil habit nature seems to have given an instructive lesson by the stagnation of all fluids. The pond's water sooner corrupts than the rivulet; the air confined, and prevented from motion, becomes foul and noisome; and the idle man is a burthen to himself and a pest to society. How sublimely the Bard of Avon discourses on this enticing vice !

What is man,
 If the chief good and market of his time
 Be but to sleep and feed ? A beast :—no more.
 Sure He that made us with such large discourse,
 Looking before and after, gave us not
 That capability and God-like reason,
 To rust in us unua'd! *Hamlet.*

Low Company.

The propensity to low company is the ambition of inferior minds, that they may exercise a superiority of rank or riches over their humble companions, for friends they cannot be called. The famous Lord Clarendon, a man of much knowledge and observation in life, has remarked, “ that in the whole course of his life he never knew one man, of what condition soever, arrive at any degree of reputation in the world, who made choice of or delighted in the company or conver-

sation of those, who in their qualities were inferior, or in their parts not much superior, to themselves. Tony Lumpkin, in "She Stoops to Conquer," is an admirable piece of ridicule on these antipodes of civilization.

Varieties of Memory.

Some men remember history, some poetry, some mechanics, some astrology, according as they have a turn to either of these pursuits. We may hence infer, and usefully, that memory is the daughter of attention, and the grand-daughter of inclination, without which we could not recollect, on account of the weak impression that matters which do not interest us make on the recollection. By attention we strengthen memory to a surprising degree, if we are possessed of a fair share of talent, and a moderate portion of steadiness in our pursuits. Pope says, wittily and justly, on two sorts of people,

Wits have short memories, and dunces none.

That is, of things worth knowing; for many blockheads are famous for their retention "of unconsidered trifles."

Hermitages.

It is related that the late Queen Caroline built an Hermitage, and hired a man to play the hermit

in it; but the fellow turned out a drunken rascal, and added very much to the parish rates by his amours. An honest, though very poor man, had refused this royal retreat. Such a scheme as the Queen's seems not much more deep in the knowledge of mankind, than his who should build a cottage, and expect to find a happy man to live in it. "*Fronti nulla fides.*" 'Tis true, an hermitage and a cottage may be agreeable objects to the lovers of fancy, and picturesque scenery; and he who never enters the inside of either is the only man who will never be deceived in his expectations of finding there piety, innocence, and content. A modern poet, who seems to have searched narrowly into the inside of rural life, has sung with more truth, than poets generally think necessary to their compositions—

Yes, they (the Muses) sing of happy swains,
Because the Muses never knew their pains.

Crabbe's Village.

Book-Worms.

These plodders in the mines of literature are well described, and properly ridiculed, by one who could value real learning, and penetrate into the mockeries of it, with equal powers of skill and discernment.

However many books,
 Wise men have said, are wearisome ; who reads
 Incessantly, and to his reading brings not
 A spirit and a judgment, equal or superior,
 (And what he brings, what need he elsewhere seek ?)
 Uncertain and unsettled still remains,
 Deep versed in books, and shallow in himself ;
 Crude or intoxicate, collecting toys
 And trifles for choice matters worth a sponge,
 As children gathering pebbles on the shore.

Paradise Regained, b. iv. l. 321.

Socrates.

It is related of this eminent Philosopher, that being asked why he was contented to live in so small a house, replied gravely, that, small as it was, he wished that he might be able to fill it with true friends. Alas ! Socrates knew nothing, as he says himself ; or Athens must have been a much less polite place than London ; where a man of less character for sense or knowledge than Socrates was, may collect five hundred friends together in one evening ; but perhaps Socrates would not have allowed them to be friends, but only acquaintances — Definitions are dangerous things.

Pagan Deities, and their Jesters.

It is agreed among scholars, that the ancients
 formed their gods according to the ideas which
 they entertained of the great folks (as we call them)

on earth. When they had peopled the celestial regions with lords of this description, they could not omit the companions who they saw were attendants on the palaces below. They therefore supplied these celestial synods with a "Merryman," under the name of Momus, whose place consisted in the offices of making their gods and goddesses merry. An English Poet describes these Merry-men, or modern terrestrial Momusses, by indignant queries,

Who'd be a crutch, to prop a rotten peer,
Or living pendant dangling at his ear?
Who'd be a glass with flattering grimace,
Still to reflect the temper of his face?
Or cushion when his heaviness may please,
To loll or thump it for his better ease?

Dr. Young's Love of Fame.

Doggrel Rhyme.

Though perhaps Butler has carried the liberty of making double rhymes in concluding a line to a great licence, yet Swift, Prior, and after them R. L. Lloyd, have improved the pleasure arising from their witty poems by managing, with more art, their rhymes with this double chime. Fastidious critics in poetry, like some of their brethren in the musical department, object to any pleasantry as incompatible with the serious character of their art; but let both these professors in arts (whose

principal merit consists in entertaining) recollect that grave subjects are not exclusively the province of poetry or music. A poet is no more confined to a grave-stone, than a musician is required to compose only dirges. It were indeed to be wished that those bards who write on such grave subjects,

“That teach the rustic moralist to die,”

should not raise our smiles, instead of our sympathy, in our meditations among the tombs.

Business.

The difficulty which attends on a plain honest man, in the transaction of public business, chiefly lies with the persons among whom he attempts to carry it on to its conclusion. Private interest is the first great impediment to its progress; the cunning which pervades the schemes of the interested; the unmanly deference paid to some leading persons; the love of talk, in some persons inordinate, and if in rich ones, not to be easily controlled; the frequent repetitions of meeting to no purpose, till at last fatigue and disgust drive the well-disposed man from such affairs altogether. We are reminded of the poet's lines on life's brevity,

“Oh! gentlemen, the time of life is short;
“To spend the shortness basely were too long.”

Henry IV. act 5, scene 3.

The Scholar's Felicity.

Dr. Young,* speaking of "Composition," remarks, "to men of letters it is not only a noble amusement, but a sweet refuge; it improves their parts, and promotes their peace; it opens a back-door out of the bustle of this busy and idle world into a delicious garden of moral and intellectual fruits and flowers, the key of which is denied to the rest of mankind. When stung with idle anxieties, or teased with fruitless impertinence, or yawning over insipid diversions, then we see the blessings of a lettered recess." So sings an elegant poet—

Such of the Muses are the able powers,
That since with them I spent the vacant hours,
I find nor hawk, nor hound, nor other thing,
Tournays nor revels, (pleasures for a king,)
Yield more delight.

Britannia's Pastorals, by W. Brown.

Modern Composition.

Shakespeare, to whom no discrimination of many-coloured life was wanting, has facetiously described the great beauty of modern composition. The antithesis, "your reasons† at dinner have been sharp and sententious, pleasant without scurrility, witty without affection,‡ audacious without

* See his Conjectures on Original Composition.

† Arguments.

‡ Affectation.

impudency, learned without opinion,* and strange without heresy." This praise of 'Holofernes the schoolmaster,' is put into the mouth of his admirer, 'Sir Nathaniel the curate.'—*Love's Labour Lost*.

Democrats.

Dr. S. Johnson, in his *Lives of the Poets*, with his usual knowledge of human characters and motives, well describes the temper of a democrat. Speaking of Akenside, he says, "Whether, when he resolved not to be a dissenting minister, he ceased to be a dissenter, I know not. He certainly retained an unnecessary and outrageous zeal for what he called liberty; a zeal which sometimes disguises from the world, and not rarely from the mind which it possesses, an envious desire of plundering wealth, or degrading greatness, and of which the immediate tendency is innovation and anarchy, an inveterate eagerness to subvert and confound, with very little care of what shall be established."

Lovers of Poetry.

Amongst the readers of the poets there are two sorts, one who loves the 'rhyme and reason' in Boileau and Pope; and the other is attached to the 'fairy kind of writing,' as Dryden calls it, and

* Opiniativeness.

would prefer Ariosto and Spenser to both. The disciples of each school defend warmly the tenets which they favour; and it becomes a matter of dispute, not easily stated, and never to be decided, which readers possess the superior taste. The French have a stile of versification suited to familiar subjects, in which Prior, Swift, and R. L. Lloyd, have shewn great excellence, and have used a metre of eight feet very conformable to their light themes. An excellent critic and poet has, however, placed Fancy as an indispensable attendant on the true bard:

At every season let my ear,
Thy solemn whisperings, Fancy, hear;
Oh! warm, *enthusiastic* maid,
Without thy powerful *vital* aid,
That breathes an *energy divine*,
That gives a soul to every line;
Ne'er may I strive, with lips profane,
To utter an *unhallow'd* strain.

Ode to Fancy, by Warton.

The words in *italics* express very strongly the real poet.

Rough Characters.

As some writers mistake coarseness of expression for strength of style and vigour of thought, so many persons in common life wish to attain the reputation of honest and firm men, thereby assuming a roughness of manners and speech. Yet surely the language of a highwayman is neither

smooth nor attractive. The nodosities of the oak may apparently, to the eye of him who knows little of natural history, pass for strength; but an Evelyn or Linnæus would tell him, that such excrescencies shew the diseases in the tree, as much as tumour and chalkstone swellings proclaim the debility of the human body.

Acting and Declamation.

It was natural that actors on the French stage should recite the lines of Corneille and Racine "with the same spirit as the authors wrote;" but from the English stage declamation was driven by the taste and conduct of the inimitable David Garrick. The mystery of this great actor's excellence, and the opposite faults which prevailed before his brilliant career, are well described in the following lines. The merit of an actor, says the discerning Poet,

Lies not in trick, or attitude, or start—
Nature's true knowledge is his only art.
The strong-felt passion bolts into his face;
The mind untouch'd, what is it but grimace?
To this one standard make your just appeal,
Here lies the golden secret,—learn to feel.

Actor, by Robert Lloyd.

Novels.

These fictitious histories having succeeded to the ancient romances which chiefly appealed to the

imagination, profess their facts and characters to be drawn from real life; and may, no doubt, if ably and faithfully executed, be of very extensive utility. Their readers are innumerable, whilst there are few who aspire to gain instruction from history. Multitudes look upon the novel as their friend, philosopher, and guide, in the middle stations of life. A writer of a novel should make it the 'stuff of his conscience' to end his tale with rewarding his virtuous, and punishing his vicious, characters; or he deprives his readers of much pleasure. So true does Horace sing—

Amusive tales a double use will find,
When they instruct as well as please the mind

Conscience.

This is a word very liable to be abused, and though often very vehemently uttered, widely differs from the "still small voice" of self-approbation. In fact, no man has a right to set up a court of conscience in his own breast, and to square his own actions by his own rules of law and equity. As a member of society, he has tacitly subscribed to the common laws, by which experience has taught the communion to ensure the safety of a state, and procure advantages to every individual. If a man acts by the private canons of his own conscience, he is a very dan-

gerous neighbour, and a very untrusty subject. Pliny (lib. iii. lett. 20) has spoken justly and frankly "*Multi famam, pauci conscientiam verentur.*"

Queen Elizabeth.

In Thomas Hearne's edition of Camden's History of this Maiden Queen, we read a singular anecdote of that royal coquet. "When the queen (says Camden) passed through her state rooms, the ladies attending her in her advanced age used to remove the looking-glasses from their places, when the queen went through their rooms, lest they might reflect the royal visage, then in the decline." Elizabeth, who was conversant with the Greek language, had probably read a Greek epigram, so well turned into English by Prior,—

Venus, take my votive glass,
Since I am not what I was :
What hereafter I may be,
Venus, let me never see.

Rich Wives.

A caution not to choose a wife merely for her fortune's sake, the honest and sensible Plutarch has offered to us, with a strong and beautiful illustration. "As there is little or no use to be made of a mirror, though in a frame of gold, and encased with all the sparkling variety of the richest

gems, unless it render back the similitude of the image it receives, so there is nothing of profit in a wealthy dowry, unless the condition of the temper, and the humour of the wife, be conformable to the natural disposition and inclination of the husband, so that he sees the virtues of his own mind exactly represented in hers.—*Plutarch's Conjugal Precepts.*

Mutual Duties in a Married State.

Women, in honouring and submitting to their husbands, procure honour and respect to their husbands; but when they strive to get the mastery, they become a reproach, not only to themselves, but to those who are so ignominiously hen-pecked. But then again it behoves a husband to controul his wife, not as a master does his vassal, but as the soul governs the body, with the gentle hand of mutual friendship and reciprocal affection.—*Ibid.*

Night Thoughts, by Dr. Young.

Obscurity hangs in lurid clouds over many passages in this celebrated composition, yet there are some very affecting and delightful by their splendour and sweetness. Shakespeare himself might have been honoured in adopting the following lines on sleep, had he wished to have repeated his efforts on the same subject.

Tir'd nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep,
 He like the world his ready visit pays,
 Where fortune smiles: the wretched he forsakes,
 Soft on his downy pinions flies from woe,
 And lights on lids unsullied with a tear.

Difficulties in Life.

In our conduct in life, it is the greatest instance of our prudence to be so connected with it, as not to be too much entangled in its concerns; for it is easy to make knots, but very difficult to untie them and liberate ourselves. Alexander the Great, and such men, indeed, may cut the Gordian knot of complicated difficulties, but lesser persons must suffer themselves to be hampered in them for life. An abstinence from the more tumultuous pleasures is the golden medium of the poets, and the rational content of philosophers. Martial, in some verses to his friend Julius, has in the four last lines given us a good caution for tranquillity of mind, if not for happiness.

Si vitare velis acerba quædam,
 Et tristes animi cavere morsus,
 Nulli te facias nimis sodalem,
 Gaudebis minus, et minus dolebis.

IMITATED.

The way to keep the heart in peace,
 And bid each foolish wish to cease,
 Is in our minds alone to rest,
 Contented to be slightly blest,
 Nor to society confide
 For joys so mixed with care and pride.

Questioners.

There are some half-witted persons, who, multiplying question upon question, puzzle the wisest and fatigue the most patient of men. Christina of Sweden, who seems to have possessed more inclination for learning than a genius, provoked Descartes to say, "Madam, I have no power to give you a *pourquoi* for all your *pourquois*?" Butler, with his usual acuteness and humour, ridicules this folly of endless interrogation, in his description of his all-accomplished hero—

Whatever sceptic could enquire for,
For every why he had a wherefore.

Hudibras, Part 1, Canto 1.

Lavater.

The author of physiognomy seems to have carried into his aphorisms some of the fantastic, and much of the obscure, parts of his intellect. Two aphorisms are worth considering a second time, though they may seem dark at the first view of them. 'To whom nothing is obscure, nothing is plain,' may signify that men *pretending* to understand the obscure, yet shew their want of sagacity by starting at what is easy to others. There are such intellects; and Butler seems to allude to them in his hero's erudition*—

* Hudibras, part 1, line 127.

Besides, he was a shrewd philosopher,
 And had read every text and gloss over :
 Whate'er the crabbedst author hath,
 He understood by th' implicit faith.

The second is, ' He who is not intelligible is not intelligent.' This *seems* to say, that if a man cannot explain himself, most probably he has nothing worth explaining in his head. This may be so in many instances ; yet some ingenious and learned persons are very bad expositors of their own thoughts, at least off-hand.

Words.

These *signs* of our ideas, as the learned Wollaston calls them, vary much in their modes of representation, and indeed become in time signs of opposite ideas. *Virtù*, in Italian, evidently *virtus* corrupted, means *now* a taste in fiddling and paining ; among the Romans, a taste for fighting for the good of their country. In our Church Service, we pray that justice may be administered *indifferently* ;* but surely a quorum of modern magistrates would not think themselves complimented, were they reported to consult and act so *indifferently* in their decisions ?

Technical Terms.

Many such prevail in commerce, and among professional men, that abstractedly appear very

* Impartially.

ludicrous. A lawyer is *concerned* for you, though, perhaps, he is your greatest foe; an *under-writer* is in the way of growing rich, which is quite a different case with his synonym, an inferior author. A *warm* man in the city does not imply a passionate or warm-hearted man, but an opulent and covetous curmudgeon. We cannot but smile at the common phrases in bulletins from Mark-lane, ‘that peas look up, and pigs look down;’ that Mr. Alderman — is considered a bear in Change-alley, and that a common councilman hobbled out a lame duck.

Satires on Women.

These philippics recoil upon the authors, as the faults and vices of woman generally proceed from the vices of men. The jealousy which many men entertain of the influence of females on society, and on individuals, is the cause of many of these invectives, which are as unjust as they are indecent. Women do certainly aim at and obtain great power, but they cannot do it *vi et armis*, but by those means of gentle acts of persuasion with which nature has furnished them; but if men will be uncandid, and judge their own causes, women have a right to complain, in the language of the poet,

Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow,
Thou shalt not escape calumny.

Measure for Measure.

Quarrelling, its Modes and Degrees.

There are some men so skilful in this department, that they can manage it so well as to maintain the character of bold men, without venturing any consequences. Such men consider "discretion as the best part of valour;" and though they may be "butchers of a button-hole," they are by no means bloody-minded. A man of quiet and peaceable habits, when involved in a quarrel, wherein his feelings are strongly enlisted, though a man of real courage, yet often appears a bully, because he is unused to be angry, and, in the language of the law, he vouches over the common vouchee.

The Merits of Rhyme Considered.

It seems remarkable that a critic like Dr. Johnson, of powers of high discrimination and most ample comprehension on all subjects of literary estimation, should have issued so violent, and seemingly so partial, a decree in favour of rhyme over blank verse. Amidst inferior poets, conversant with inferior subjects, the jingle of rhyme may make music; but among great poets, treating

on great subjects, we want no jingle to entice us on our way. Who would wish to add rhyme to Shakespeare or Milton?

Reviewers.

Among the various species of this mode of criticizing authors, the most fair and the most useful seems the analytical. The writer who gives me the most clear and impartial view of any work, is he who "takes the work to pieces," and shews me the materials and their configuration. He who gives me, *ex-parte*, his opinion of the work, communicates no information to me of the nature or merits of the author whom he affects to estimate. He who sets aside the work altogether which he pretends to review, and writes anew the subject which he condemns *sub silentio*, presents me with a fresh work, and instead of instructing me in the matter I look for, he leaves my curiosity unsatisfied, and lays a fresh burthen on my *pursuits of literature*.

Travellers with different views and motives.

It has been observed by a French writer,* that the difference between the English persons who travel into foreign countries is as wide apart as the motives which induce them to undertake their

* Rousseau.

voyages. A French nobleman leaves to his countrymen of inferior degree the honour and toil of travelling. The English lord or opulent squire thinks it a part of their superiority to boast of their having been in foreign parts. The active Frenchman, with all his wits about him, goes abroad to mend his fortunes; and the English aristocrat, to get rid of a good deal of his loose cash. The Frenchman, in the vanity of his heart, is very willing to pay for his kind reception among foreigners, by perpetual attentions to his new friends, and by the display of his gallantry and accomplishments. The Englishman, in the pride of his heart, is ready to purchase those civilities and accommodations, and would think himself degraded by accepting them without a due "consideration."

Love of Tragic Representations.

That the humbler ranks of life are attached to tragedy more than to comedy, has been before admitted; and this observation is confirmed by a ludicrous passage in "Gil Blas," in which a country schoolmaster describes a dramatic piece which he means to produce. "I am of Aristotle's opinion, that the chief end of tragedy is to raise terror. Oh! if I had attached myself to the

drama, I would have introduced none but bloody-minded princes and heroic assassins on the scene, and would have bathed myself in gore; and in my tragedy, not only the principal persons, but even their guards, should have perished. I would have murdered them all to the *very prompter*."—*Gil Blas*, vol. i. p. 207, 8vo.

Pride of Learning.

A man who is elevated in his opinion of himself because he has read many volumes which are called erudite, is not only a disagreeable but a foolish fellow. Men eminent for their studies have confessed that all they know is "nothing;" and what these presumptuous persons pretend to know is worse than nothing. These pedants, proud of the badges which some *master* authors have placed on their necks, exhibit their native passions of grovelling awe and servile imitation, and expose themselves to the ridicule of more intellectual minds. For only such judge of the extent and utility of well-concocted knowledge and vain professors' pretensions.

We, for their knowledge, men inspired adore,
Not for those truths they hide, but those they shew;
And vulgar reason finds that none knows more
Than that which he can make another know.

Sir Wm. Davenant's Philosopher, &c.

Extravagance.

The best dehortation from this vice seems the consideration, that it puts a man into a state of dependence, than which nothing can be more galling to that free and active spirit that regulates our best actions, and forms our real happiness. Men of letters in general are too fond of patronage, and subject themselves voluntarily to this galley-slavery. A female modern poetess has, however, spoken on the subject of dependency with true masculine indignation.

TO DEPENDENCE.

Dependence ! heavy, heavy are thy chains,
 And happier they who from the dangerous sea,
 Or the dark mine, procure with endless pains
 An hard-earned pittance, &c. *C. Smith, son. 57.*

President Montesquieu.

This writer was a man of wit, and could shew the nimbleness of it even under the heavy burthen of politics. On the most intricate and profound subjects of state his style is gay, and his political observations are often so short and pointed, that he may be reckoned a writer of political epigrams in prose.

Praise.

Some weak persons affect an air of wisdom by pretending to hate *all* praise. This, as the logi-

cians say, is proving too much, intimating that they are heedless of praiseworthy actions. When a man is conscious that he has done a noble or a generous action, he is no more to be encouraged in declining the acknowledgment of its merit, than he would be wise in refusing his rents when they become due. Flattery, which is false praise, is base coin, and its currency should always be checked.

Epitaphs.

These commemorations of the dead should be sincere in their eulogies. "*De mortuis nil nisi verum*" is a sound doctrine. A friend, talking on this subject with a levity not becoming so *grave* a matter, used to say that in general the only part of an epitaph which was true was contained in the two first words, "here lieth."

Laughter-Loving.

Pope translates the epithet given by Homer to Venus, by *laughter-loving*,* very improperly. Some handsome faces are much disfigured by laughter. The fit puts (to use a painter's phrase) all their features out of drawing. Many a sensible and dignified countenance degenerates, whilst it indulges in laughter; as this relaxation of the muscles does

* Instead of smiling, or smile-loving.

not harmonize with the general *contour* of their faces or persons.

Poetry often ill criticized.

To bring poetry or any work of fancy to the bar of reason, and there to try its merits, seems as unjust as to arraign a man at the Old Bailey for keeping a toy-shop, or stopping the mouth of a pretty prattling and amusing girl, by compelling her to prove her assertions.

Sir Charles Grandison.

This highly-finished character of a fine gentleman excites the censure, and perhaps the envy, of some persons, who think it too exquisitely wrought, and not in nature, and so condemn the author. Surely a writer of character may with as much propriety draw a very fine model for imitation, as well as a statuary a model of ideal beauty. Sir Charles Grandison is the moral "Apollo Belvidere;" inasmuch as this statue was considered by the ancients as the best representation of dignified and male beauty, free from the effeminate character of Bacchus, and the familiar archness of Mercury.—See *Spence's Polymetis*.

Naturalists.

Some of these philosophers are very bold in recommending their experiments to others. Dr. H——, writing on the strong digestive powers of eagles, by means of attrition, of very hard substances, says, that you may hear the noise of this operation of the gizzard of those large birds by laying *your ear close to their stomachs when they are empty!*

Wide Prospects.

It seems singular that many persons are very fond of very extensive prospects, without any one object large enough to fix the attention. A friend, who had been carried to one of those ocean scenes, said that they reminded him of a long story, without any point; and that he then was conscious only of a very *great* opportunity of seeing *nothing*.

Whigs and Tories.

It may seem strange that men of great abilities and high rank will submit to rest their political opinions on *nicknames*, as schoolboys would call these appellations, when “ins and outs” are so much more intelligible. On stating this to a friend, more conversant with the world than myself, he assured me that, as ignorance is apt to beget wonder and admiration, *he* supposed that great men did not wish to be intelligible.

Rogue-Fanciers.

We have some singular expressions, but very common, which signify particular tastes,—tulip-fanciers, bird-fanciers, &c. When I am perusing Milton and Lord Byron's poems, I think both those poets to be rogue-fanciers. Lord Byron's heroes are all Newgate birds, and Milton's favourite hero is the Devil himself. Milton, perhaps, a very great poet, may defend himself in his attachment to the Father of all Lies.

Rhetoric and Logic.

There seems an analogy in these two arts to those of design and colouring in that of the painter's art. Modern rhetoric partakes of the high colouring of the Venetian school; and the logic of the schools exhibits the severe and rigid, yet exact, outline of the Roman artists. Gibbon colours like a Venetian; and Dr. P—— daubs like a Dutchman, and employs his talents, like him, on the commonest utensils, and the most trivial subjects and materials.

Analogies.

Comparisons more often darken than illustrate the subject. London has been described by some writers as a capital or head, too large for the rest of England's body. Why it is called the head

might puzzle the writer himself to explain. Had the author of this analogy ever been a guest at the Lord Mayor's feast, perhaps he would have called the city the *belly* of England, which by its enormous voracity starves the rest of the country.

Great Quoters.

These borrowings from the wit and learning of other men are entertaining to a company, if the quoters do not too much presume on their memories; or else their scraps proclaim them mere *parrots* in literature, and instead of men rich in learned ore, shew themselves to be mendicants. The line which Dr. Young so wittily applied to proud and *degenerate* nobles, may be applied to these usurpers of learning, who are not scholars in their own right, and who

Bring in their bills, instead of their discharge.

Wordsworth, the Poet.

This eminent poetical favourite of babes and sucklings has, in a very long preface to his "Lyrical Ballads," tried to prove that sentiment, independent of poetical expression, is sufficient to captivate the fancy, and has overset his own theory by writing neither poetry nor prose, but metrical lullabies. Indeed a long preface was necessary to set forth the truth of his doctrine,

for, as the lawyers say, it does not appear on the face of it.

Love in Old Age.

It has been facetiously observed by some French writer that love in old age bears a strong resemblance to the attack of the small-pox on an aged subject, viz. that the disorder coming late comes with double force. It may also be compared to a flame catching hold of old materials, so that the devastation becomes the more rapid.

Miseries of Authors.

Some call the labours of an author a trade, and others deem it a profession. But whatever title it may assume or accept, an author finds neither the world nor the "world's law" his friend. A critic may be an offender in any way he chooses against a poor author. He may abuse him as a man who has taken a trade he neither understands nor practises fairly, and ought not on any account to hope or even wish for success. No damages will be given in any court to the relief of the wretched plaintiff, as no law has given any security from such attacks. They have sinned against "the world and the world's law." Let us hear what a great Poet says of his own line of business—

The unhappy man who once has trail'd a pen,
Lives not to please himself, but other men.
Is always drudging, wastes his life and blood,
Yet only drinks and eats what you think good.
What praise soe'er the poetry deserve,
Yet every fool can bid the poet starve.

Dryden's Prologue to N. Lee's Cæsar Borgia.

Mending Old Stories.

It often happens that we hear some excellent stories told in conversation, where the actors are the historians. Smart repartees, severe replies, and animated oburgations form these amusing narratives. Experience in time, and knowledge of the personal characters of the narrators, teach us to suspect that these were not the original facts, speeches, &c. but were, on the recollection of these entertaining persons, enlarged, improved, and enlivened by posterior meditation, and by the aid of second thoughts, and which were not likely to have sprung up suddenly on the first occasion of them.

Taste for Rural Objects

Is often influenced by personal feelings, and circumstances not connected with literature. Dr. Johnson declaimed against the generally attractive species of poetry called Pastorals. His love of a city life, and that throne of human happiness, to use his own words,—an armed chair in a tavern, accounts for his dislike to rural scenes, rural

ideas, and rural personages. His entertaining biographer has related that, once walking in Greenwich Park with his learned friend, he observed, to indulge his companion's taste, "This is fine, Sir, but not so fine as Fleet-street." 'No ! Sir,' he replied warmly and vociferously.

Encomiastic Critics.

Some readers, more nice, perhaps, than wise, shew great dislike to critics who point out the beauties of authors, and express themselves delighted with those passages. Yet surely to have a sensible and an agreeable companion with us, when we are travelling a country of much diversity of good and bad prospect, it is a happiness, arising from social sympathy, to see our guide and fellow-traveller joining us in our applause, and participating in our enjoyments. This is "smoothing the brow of criticism."

Boasting, and real Bravery.

The man who says that he does not fear death, is a vain boaster, most probably a coward, and most certainly a fool. To fear death, is natural; to overcome this apprehension, the result of honour and sense. An officer may be a timid man, naturally; yet perform the most intrepid actions, from principle and reflection on his duties. Charles

the Second wittily ridiculed this boasting in a fool.
 "That man," said Charles, "never snuffed a
 candle with his finger." And the Poet said wisely,

Let valiant fools
 Brag of their souls, no matter what they say ;
 A coward dares in ill do more than they.
Shirley's Example.

Electioneering.

After reading the solemn and trivial praises of
 the privileges of honest Englishmen in voting for
 their representatives, we are not a little amused
 to find the *real* state of things as narrated in the
 followingsatiric lines—

When the Duke's grandson for the country stood,
 His beef was fat, and his October good.
 His Lordship took each ploughman by his fist,
 Drank to their sons, their wives and daughters kiss'd.
 But when strong beer their freeborn hearts inflames,
 They sell him bargains, and they *call* him names, &c.
 The man that has both land and money too
 May wonders in a trading borough do.
 They'll praise his venison, and commend his port,
 And turn their former Members into sport ;
 And, if he likes it, satirize the Court. }
 But at a feast 'tis difficult to know
 From real friends an undiscover'd foe.
 The man that swears he will the poll secure,
 And pawns his soul that your election 's sure
 Suspect that man ; beware all is not right ;
 He's ten to one a corporation bite, &c.
The Art of Politics, in Imitation of Horace's Art of Poetry.

Rural Pleasures.

Since pastorals have been the fashion from the time of Theocritus to Johnny Gay, the innocent pleasures, and the honest inhabitants, and the peaceful hours of a rural life, have been the favourite themes; but poets, like doctors, can disagree.

Virtue no more in rural plains,
Or innocence or peace maintains.
Fierce party rage each village fires
With wars of justices and squires.
Attornies for a barley straw
Whole ages hamper folks in law:
And every neighbour's in a flame,
About their rates, their tithes, and game.
Some quarrel for their hares and pigeons,
And some for difference in religions.
Some hold their parson the best preacher,
The tinker some a better teacher, &c.
Epist. from Soame Jennyns, esq; to Lord Littleton:
see Epistles, Familiar and Humorous.

Ancients and Moderns.

In works of fancy, and in the art and practice of poetry and rhetoric, perhaps, the ancients were equal, if not superior, to us. In the art of close reasoning the moderns certainly excel them. This superiority arises from the gradual increase of the reasoning powers produced by experience and observation. No one can doubt that John

Locke was a better reasoner, though not so elegant a writer, as Plato.

Ancient and Modern Customs.

Canonization in the Romish Church is very analogous in its principles and practices to the apotheosis of the Grecians and Romans. The persons, indeed, were different, and the virtues also for which they received their honours. In modern Rome the *pious* cardinal was canonized, and in ancient Rome the military hero.

Public Libraries.

In these large and crowded depôts of human knowledge and human imagination, I cannot help reflecting that a great diminution of volumes would have taken place, if their authors had previously studied Locke on the Human Understanding, and gravely used their thoughts on the abuse of words, and on the boundaries and real powers of the human intellect.

Faith.

When this means a belief in religious opinions, merely speculative, and altogether removed from practice, it produces the most fatal consequence to all religion, viz. an absolute divorce of piety and morality. Violent arguments in favour of any opinion may be the product solely of an

eloquent and ingenious man; but he who lives piously and morally can alone be entitled to our confidence. In this sense I understand the lines of Pope as referring to religious disputes among men of no moral principle—

For modes of faith let *graceless* bigots fight ;
His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right.

Essay on Man, epist. iii. line 305.

Garrulity.

Who has not observed that the longest stories are the most insignificant and dull. In fact, blockheads tell very long stories. Whatever the matter of them may be, they have no condensing powers, no "skill in intellectual distillation," by which the essence of their tales might be extracted. *Quam multa quam paucis*, is a very good description of a pleasing style. As *Tacitus* has too much matter for his few words, the contrary is true of proserers. Cowper, in his *Task*, calls them, humorously,

Sedentary weavers of long tales.

Indeed the tales of such men seem rather manufactures, than natural productions.

Theory and Practice often at Variance.

Boccalini* wrote a treatise on government, so much approved of, that Pope Paul V. appointed

* Warton's Notes to Pope.

him to rule over a city in Italy, but soon recalled him, from an incapacity to govern. M. Boileau wrote a very excellent art of poetry, and many very dull, and now forgotten poems; and John Locke, with all his powers of reasoning, wrote on government with such questionable principles, that only *one* party has adopted them, and his laws for the government of Carolina were never put in practice.

Ostracism.

This very singular practice in Greece set all the evil passions of envy and jealousy among the "many" against their superiors, and kept the minds of the people in a continual state of real or imaginary jealousies, and fears of being tyrannized over by their great generals, and others in high power. Miltiades, though a man famed for his virtues and his conquests, found, as Horace says, that envy submits only to death.

Supremo fine domari.

And Cornelius Nepos, at the end of the life of that hero, says, "the people, reflecting upon these things, were more willing that he should be punished, than that they themselves should continue under their apprehensions from his power.

Amusements.

Where opposite interests prevail, we do not wonder that two of a trade cannot agree; but it might be expected that, in regard to our amusements, if we were unanimous, we should not be litigious, yet the huntsman ridicules the fisherman; the musician laughs at them both; and, like rude boys at play, we seem eager to snatch the playthings from each other's hands, and prove the truth of Dryden's well-known apothegm—

Men are but children of a larger growth.

Anecdote of Timanthes, the famous Greek painter, considered in the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

It was an instance, indeed, of the ingenuity of the artist, to cast over the face of Agamemnon a veil, but it surely confesses the imperfection of the art or his skill. "The praises," says a late great painter, "on this invention of Timanthes were bestowed by persons* who themselves were not painters. They used it only as an illustration of their own art (oratory). It served their purpose, and it certainly was not their business to enter into the objections that lie against it in another art."—*Sir J. Reynolds, discourse 8. See also Fuseli's Lectures, 4to.*

* Cicero and Quintilian.

Poetry and Music.

These have been, by some theorists, considered as sister arts; and indeed this analogy of relation is striking, when we consider, that their different modes of obtaining their common end (viz. exciting pleasure) often produce the same jealousy which two sisters may be supposed to feel, who are attached to one and the same lover. The poet is jealous of the composer, lest he should render the lines of the poem flat or unintelligible by the nice divisions and subdivisions peculiar to his art; and the musician is afraid that strong sense and nervous language should impede the fluency of his notes, or render the melody feeble and confused. So the two sister arts seldom agree, or look for any compromise where mutual jealousy so strongly operates. It may be a question, whether in some parts* Milton would have approved of Handel's composing his L'Allegro.

Cowley and Milton's Prose Style.

It seems very singular that Milton, who had a very high opinion of the literary genius of his predecessor in the tuneful art, should yet so far overlook the simple, elegant, and melodious style

* The attempts at imitating, by musical notes, the poetic imagery.

of Cowley in his prose works, and adopt the reverse of all these good qualities in writing, when he was employed on his own prose essays. Nothing but the most inveterate pedantry could have led so great a man into so foul an error; for it requires all our reverence for the genius of Milton in his poetry to induce the reader to plod in the prose of this illustrious bard,

And through the palpable obscure, find out
His uncouth way.

Par. L. b. ii. l. 405.

*A Critic described in the Fashionable Style
of Antithesis.*

A respectable and sensible, though no literary, man asked his friend M. Fontenelle what he should say of some poems that were brought him frequently to give his opinion of their merits. Say 'stuff,' said the philosopher drily, 'and nine times out of ten your criticism will be just.' This easy mode of judging of literary merit is from facility become popular. Mr. G— without learning is pedantic, without wit satirical, diffuse without being perspicuous, minute without precision, and dogmatical without the powers of instruction. Yet is Mr. G— a formidable critic on Fontenelle's plan, and finds it easy to censure *en masse*, when the true analytical process of balancing the good, bad,

and indifferent parts of a literary work, would exceed his faculties of attention, his candour, and his sagacity.

Logic and Poetry.

So widely separate are the provinces of these studies, that they seem incompatible, even in the minds of very considerable intellects. Who does not admire the precision with which the late David Hume, the historian, treats many subjects of rational enquiry; yet, in his observations on poetry, he seems not only out of his element, but many may think out of his senses also. What admirer of our great bard can read, without indignation, the following criticism;—‘Nervous and picturesque expressions, as well as descriptions, abound in him:’* but in vain we look either for parity or simplicity of diction.†

Prose Writing.

This mode of composition is more difficult than those may imagine who have not tried it. Those who trust solely to the rules of grammar, will write like boys ignorant of accredited phraseology, and will attempt without success new combinations. Those who altogether confide in their memories

* Shakespeare. † History of England, vol. vi. p. 162.

fall into a patchwork kind of composition, made up from phrases of various and very different authors. The solid grandeur of Johnson, the splendid diction of Gibbon, the lively flippancy of Horace Walpole, would exhibit a very strange and uncouth arrangement; as the mere schoolboy composition would be flat, dull, and obscure. A dictionary of phrases, from our most eminent writers, would be as valuable to the young prose writer, as the *Gradus ad Parnassum* is to the unfledged votary of the Muses. The works of Dryden, Swift, and Addison would make an excellent 'Thesaurus Anglicitatis.'

Commerce between Scholars and the Great.

M. D'Alembert, who by his connection with the great Frederic of Prussia was a proper commentator on the line of the philosophical Latin poet,

'Dulcis inexpertis cultura potentis amici,'

wrote an essay on the Commerce between Men of Letters and the Great, but gives little encouragement for the cultivation of it to his fellow literati. 'Should you,' says he, 'enter into an argument with your *Mæcenas*, and get the better of him; as his personal merit sunk, so would his assumed consequence rise, and a quarrel would

certainly ensue, and perhaps both parties would take umbrage, and the connection would soon be dissolved." Perhaps this circumstance occasioned the separation of the late Lord Orford and the Poet Gray.

Subject continued.

D'Alembert was indeed a man of a very independent mind ; and tells, *con amore*, in the above treatise, the *bon mot* of a friend, a man of letters, who was compelled, by some cogent reasons, to attend on a Minister of State. ' Sir, he, the patron, endeavoured to be on a very familiar footing with me, but with much seeming reverence. I rejected his overtures of intimacy.' His proposed epitaph, written by himself, is strongly characteristic of the writer :

" He was greatly esteemed by many honest men.
" He died poor, because he would not sacrifice his liberty
to the will of a powerful Monarch."

D'Alembert's Letter to Madame Deffand ; in which he declares, that he would be content to have this inscription on his tomb-stone.

The same Subject.

D'Alembert divides the scholars who pay their courtships to the great into four descriptions.

"The first bear this servitude without feeling it, and are beyond the power of cure. The second wince under the yoke, but bear it from the hopes of profit contingent or in possession. The third class are those persons, who in the morning are determined to break their chains, and in the evening rivet them still faster, and seem to reject the favours with one hand, and accept them with the other, and are never decisive. The fourth class is by far the worst, and are more numerous than one would imagine. These persons pay the utmost reverence to their patrons in public, whilst in private they abuse them with the utmost rancour. They resemble a sect of ancient philosophers, who, being obliged to enter the Temple of Jupiter at certain times, on leaving it reviled the god most handsomely."

Translations from the French.

Though to every educated person some general rules of grammar must be known, and to such the French tongue cannot be difficult to interpret; yet in no department of literature is there so much neglect or ignorance of language than in English translations from the French. It is true that the French have many phrases, and that idioms are

often difficult to match with correspondent ones in another language; yet booksellers should, at least, employ persons of education in these works; if they do not, but frequently omit this caution, mere English readers are scurvily used by men who should always be, and often are, *patrons of literature*.

Principles of Science.

Many persons have not leisure, and others, though attached to literary pursuits, may not have perseverance to enter into the detail of science, yet have comprehension enough to learn the principles. He who would not follow the process of calculating an eclipse, would yet wish to know the *rationale* of the calculation. He who would not undertake to penetrate the secret of algebra, would yet be very desirous of knowing its nature and power. How many persons, on the contrary, among the learned, but surely not among the knowing, plod in particulars, without ever using their minds to trace principles. Hence arises much error in matters of importance, and the calculator in his statements proves himself a very good arithmetician, or even algebraist, but a very bad logician. The famous Dr. Price,* in his Essay on

* Price on Population, &c.

Population, would not have erred so much, had he reasoned as well as cyphered.

Disappointed Men.

The miseries of which this sort of men are very apt to complain frequently and loudly, arise from excessive vanity, and a wrong estimate of their own talents, and a mismanagement of them. Dean Swift, with a disposition strongly tending to pride, arrogance, and conceit, complained of the little assistance his great friends in the state afforded to his abilities and exertions. The Dean, however, did not recollect, but his friends did, that his demeanour was proud, his pretensions arrogant, and his advice given often unasked, and in tones very different from those which great men expect from the persons who look up to them for favour or preferment. His mighty patrons had no wish to place a man in the House of Lords whom they could not controul as a private man; in whom they discovered an insatiable ambition, a pride not easily gratified, and an arrogance it was always their wish, but seldom in their power, to controul; and who was endowed with talents of which they all stood in awe.

Poetry of Elder Times.

Dean Swift, in his allegorical "Tale of the Tub," says the Reformers tore off too much of

the lace and finery from the church's ceremonies and ornaments. There have been also, in modern times, Luthers and Calvins among the critics on poetry, who would reduce the vagaries of fancy to the rules of reason. Yet an eminent critic and poet,* in the eighteenth century, delights to say of days of yore, "a few dim characters were yet legible in the mouldering creed of tradition, and every goblin had not vanished at the first glimmering of the morning of science."

Algebra.

Many students, it is said, who have made some progress in this very abstract, though useful, study, do yet feel the doctrine of "negative quantities" as obstructing their clearness of comprehension. This obstruction seems to arise, as M. D'Alembert conceives, from inaccurate enunciation, with which it is generally attended. It would be of great advantage to the student, therefore, to have recourse to the "Elements of Philosophy explained" (under the article Algebra), by this very eminent mathematician. For further instruction on this point, see M. D'Alembert's Elements of Phil. vol. v. p. 229.

* Warton's History of English Poetry, v. iii. p. 496.

*Calendar of Nature, or Natural History of the
Year. Second edition, 1799.*

Dr. Aikin, in the publication of this elegant and amusive volume, has been of infinite service to many readers and writers of poetry, particularly that part descriptive of rural scenes and rural objects. Every month is described by the variety of seasons it produces, and birds, shrubs, &c. are placed in their proper times of appearing. With such a manual in his possession, the city poet will no longer talk of roses in December, or the song of the nightingale be introduced in January, or the plants of the East arranged in a poem illustrative of an English climate.

The Sciences and Belles Lettres.

The difficult, and perhaps idle, question, whether the polite scholar or the profound mathematician is the superior character, has often been started, and also as often decided, by persons little qualified to adjust its merits. Let us hear, then, a writer who combined both characters. M. D'Alembert says, "whether from timidity, or my idea of justice, I ascribe equal merit to the man of letters and the man of science. Moreover, if the former has more partizans on his side, and

more who decide on his merit; on the other hand, he who extends the limits of science, can boast of more well-informed and more accurate judges of his acquirements. Should a man have the choice whether he would be a *Corneille* or a *Newton*, he would feel himself very much embarrassed in his preference, or he would be very unworthy of the privilege of having such a choice."—*D'Alembert's Melanges de Literature, Histoire, &c. vol. iv. p. 181.*

Modern Comedies.

How many writers in this department, without any knowledge of the world, and, of course, of that variety of character to be found in it, attempt scenes of comic humour. The consequence of these rash trials by unqualified persons, what trash, under the name of comedies, has been brought before the public by some modern writers, whose writings have even dared to meet the cool decision of the closet! Voltaire heard, with a smile of approbation, the excuse of his young friend, M. Marmontel, whom he advised to write a comedy: "Ah, Sir, how should I draw portraits, who have never seen faces." The modesty of Marmontel is out of fashion.—*Marmontel's Life by himself, vol. i.*

Fame.

To deprecate generally the love of being eminent, is more worthy of stoical philosophy than of common sense. Woollaston, in his "Religion of Nature," talks too abstractedly, if not absurdly, on this subject. "The man is not known ever the more to posterity, because his name is transmitted to them: he doth not live because his name does. Since Pompey is as little known as Cæsar, all that is said of their conquests amounts to this, somebody conquered somebody." Milton, in his "Paradise Regained," has spoken with great discrimination, on what subjects, and from whom derived, fame is indeed no worthy object.

For what is glory but the blaze of fame,
 The people's praise, if always praise unmix'd?
 And what the people but a herd confused,
 A miscellaneous rabble who extol
 Things vulgar, and, well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise?
Book iii. l. 47.

A Diplomatic Anecdote.

When the ambassador from Constantinople required an audience of the Caliph of Bagdad, he was told to make an humble obeisance to the Greek Emperor. This the Ambassador refusing, it was contrived that he should be introduced to the Emperor through a door, so very low as might

oblige him to make the obeisance required. The ambassador, when he arrived, no sooner saw the door than he comprehended the contrivance, and with great readiness turned about and entered the room backward.—*Harris's Philological Enquiries*, vol. ii. p. 374.

Garrulity, an anecdote.

Publius Piso, the rhetorician, being unwilling to be disturbed with much talk, gave orders to his servants that they should give answers only to such questions as he should ask them, and say no more. Piso, having invited Clodius to an entertainment, waited for him long after the appointed time; then asked his servant, if he had not called on him. "Yes," replied the servant, 'Why then does he not come?' "Because he told me he would not come." 'Why did not you tell me so before?' "Because, Sir, you never asked me the question."—*Plutarch on Talkativeness*.

Idleness.

It is a false position, that those alone live contentedly who have the least to do; for then, by this rule, women should be of more sedate dispositions than men: yet the former sit at home, and mind their domestic affairs, and are so delicate that, as Hesiod expresses it,

The virgin's tender limbs are kept from cold,
Not the least wind to touch them was so bold.

Yet we see, on the contrary, immoderate grief; little piques among themselves; jealousy, which even makes them *sick*, lest they be supplanted in their humours by a rival; superstition, fears, and vain opinions; flow, as it were, with a torrent into women's apartments.*—*Plutarch on Tranquillity of Mind.*

Shadows: an anecdote.

!Quos Mæcenæ adduxerat umbras.

Hor. lib. ii. sat. 8.

Plutarch, with great good sense, treats of these uninvited guests; and says, spiritedly, "I would allow, as it is the custom, my guests to bring their *shadows*, but I would not be one myself. He then introduces the following story, to shew the evil consequences which may arise from a great man using this privilege of bringing his *shadows* without discretion to a private house. "King Philip, perceiving the dinner not equal to the company, whispered to his followers to wait for some cheese-cakes at the latter end of the dinner; and so they

* Among the ancient Greeks, as now among the modern Turks, the women's apartments were a separate part of the master's house: and Lady M. Montague, in her *Travels in Turkey*, has given a similar account of the manners which prevail among the Turkish ladies in their harems.

restraining their appetites, the provision was more equally divided and sufficient."—*Plutarch's Sympos.*

Homer.

Seneca, in his seventh epistle, ridicules useless enquiries into antiquity. "What a deal of business there is, first, to make Homer a philosopher; and secondly, in what class to place him. One will have him to be a *stoic*, a friend to virtue, and an enemy to pleasure. Another makes him an *epicurean*, one that loves his quiet and good society. Some insist that he was a *peripatetic*; and others that he was a *sceptic*." In modern times, learned men have endeavoured to prove that this great poet was an historian.*

Love at First Sight.

It has been a matter of dispute, by those who choose rather to raise doubts than to attend to experience on any subject, whether there exists such a thing as "love at first sight." Miss D——, a lady more famous for her beauty than her wit or good temper, was disputing violently with a gentleman who maintained the affirmative of this question. "Madam," said the *cynic*, "by what I

* See Dissertations on the Troad, ridente Bryantio eruditissimo.

see and hear of women in general, I believe that love is kindled at first sight, and often extinguished at the second, and you know the proverb, "second thoughts are best." Our facetious Bard has painted the instantaneous effects of this passion with his usual waggery.

Love is a burglarer and felon,
That at the window eye does steal in
To rob our hearts, &c.
Love is a fire that burns and sparkles
In men, as naturally as charcoals,
Which sooty chemists stop in holes,
When out of wood they extract coals, &c.

Hudibras, canto 1.

*Praise requires more Talents in the Writer
than Abuse.*

The truth of this opinion cannot be more strongly evinced than in the writings of the late Bishop Hurd, which relate to the literary character and talents of his patron, Bishop Warburton. When Hurd praises his friend, his heart appears cool towards W.'s reputation, he and by no means exhibits a genius in any degree congenial and sympathetic with that of the great Prelate of Gloucester. When Hurd abuses the enemies and opponents of W., his genius then shines in subtle, refined, fastidious, and insolent observations, *usque ad nauseam*.

Temporary Solitude.

Who, during his feverish being here on earth, has not felt that calenture of the brain that exiles him from the busy hum of men, and drives him into solitude to medicine his griefs. Thomson, with great sensibility of feeling, and much poetic vigour, describes this eagerness to fly from crowded cities into solitude.

O let me pierce thy secret cell,
 And in thy deep recesses dwell ;
 Perhaps from Norwood's oak-clad fill,
 Where meditation has her fill,
 I just may cast my careless eyes,
 Where London's spiry turrets rise ;
 Think of its crimes, its cares, its pain,
 And shroud me in the woods again.
Ode to Solitude.

Mere Philologists.

These "men of many words" trust to memory alone for their reputation, and studying words *singulatim*, leave their combination to their masters. Such scholars may be compared to the mason's man who brings up the bricks for a building, but is incapable of arranging them in any form ; and the mere philologist scarcely should go so far as the compositor of the press, to be entrusted with a sentence.

Conceited Commentators.

These industrious persons much resemble their relations in letters, the philologists, as they are intent not on the context of the author they pretend to illustrate, but on words singly considered. The late Gilbert Wakefield not unfrequently forgot, or heeded not, the meaning of the poet, in the paragraph taken together; but fixed on a word, which he endeavoured to interpret to his favourite meaning.—*See Notes; passim, on his Lucretius, and Virgil's Georgics.*

Hints to Farmers, &c. Soil and Climate.

No complaints among human creatures are so common, and so generally unjust, as those in which the season, soil, &c. are implicated. We should first inquire what plants and corn we have introduced into our country, before we can found a just lamentation about their not succeeding in our soil. Many may be brought from countries in very different latitudes, and either too much or too little cold in their stepmother climate may not agree with them. Before we transpose plants, or corn, or animals, we should consider nature has appropriated both animals and vegetables to climates best suited to their various natures, and therefore it cannot be expected that they should prosper so well, when colonized. The edible

grains now in our fields are not indigenous ; and most of our garden plants are not natives in this country. See more on this subject in the Sketches of the History of Man, vol. iii. p. 871, &c.

Language.

The idea of settling a language, that is, if it means preventing any addition to its idioms and derivatives, is an experiment at once difficult, and probably injurious. The attempt was made in France in Louis XIV.'s time; but the French language is of course very poor, and it has few or no poetic phrases. Suppose our language had been settled before Shakespeare, Milton, and Dryden, what a barren phraseology should we have had now, and lost all the improvement that these mighty masters of ideas and words have communicated to us. Language, as well as ideas, must always be in a state of progression whilst alive; if it do not go forward, it will most probably be deteriorated

Imitations in Poets.

Resemblances of ideas in authors ought not to be charged as thefts, without caution. Though Pope was a reader of French authors, yet he might not, perhaps, have seen the passage which so much

resembles his own in the author quoted. M. M—, a French author of note, says, “there are two kinds of authors:—those of divine origin, born of Apollo and the Muses, who write with powers easy and sublime; and there are others who spring from corruption, like those insects who plague and infect the world.”

“Those half-learn’d wittlings, num’rous in our isle,
 “As half-form’d insects on the banks of Nile;
 “Unfinish’d things, one knows not what to call,
 “Their generation’s so equivocal.”

Essay on Criticism.

Bible Societies.

The policy of distributing the Bible among unlettered persons seems problematic. Some lines from our great poet of reason will place the question in a strong light, and may determine it with some.

“The Book thus put in ev’ry vulgar hand,
 “Which each presum’d he best could understand,
 “The common rule was made the common prey,
 “And at the mercy of the rabble lay:
 “The tender page with horny fists was gall’d,
 “And he was gifted most that loudest bawl’d:
 “The *Spirit* gave the doctoral decree,
 “And ev’ry member of a company
 “Was of his trade, and of the Bible, free. }
 “Plain truths enough for needful use they found,
 “But men would still be itching to expound,
 “Each was ambitious of th’ *obscurest* place,
 “No measure ta’en from *knowledge*, all from grace.

- "Study and pains were now no more their care,
- "Texts were explain'd by fasting and by pray'r ;
- "This was the fruit the private Spirit brought,
- "Occasion'd by great zeal and little thought."

J. Dryden's Religio Laici.

The same reasoning poet has given his opinion on the right of private doctrines, in opposition to an established church.

- "And, after hearing what our Church can say,
- "If still our reason runs another way,
- "That private reason'tis more just to curb,
- "Than hy disputes the public peace disturb :
- "For points obscure are of small use to learn,
- "But common quiet is mankind's concern." *Ibid.*

Scandal.

The love of depreciating the characters of our neighbours can have only one ground of defence—that a bad one; that a calumniator, like an American savage, thinks that the good qualities of mind and body, of which he endeavours to deprive others, will by these means be transferred to himself by this murder of the reputation of another. But on such a bad stock as the calumniator's, only bitter and sour fruits will grow. How strongly the poet speaks:

- "Slander,
- "Whose edge is sharper than the sword ; whose tongue
- "Out-venoms all the worms of Nile ; whose breath
- "Rides on the posting winds, and doth belie
- "All corners of the world," &c.

Cymbeline, act 3, scene 4.

Life, its sameness.

Those who complain of life only on account of its sameness, are not only unhappy persons, but very dull ones. Some deficiency in the intellectual vision of such folks is very analogous to the corporeal purblindness of the eye. To the latter, all colours seem blended, all the pages of a book seem unfixed, and the lines unseparated. To a man of a clear vision, corporeal and mental life holds out unexhausted variety : its different shades, its transient lights, render each daily scene interesting, and new without end, and maintain the freshness of novelty amidst innumerable repetitions.

Translation.

The younger Pliny has given admirable rules and reasons for translating passages from foreign authors into our own language. " It is very useful, and recommended by many, to translate from the Greek into Latin, and from the Latin into Greek, by which method we gain the use of proper phrases, and improve in our figures of speech ; we gain the method of expressing ourselves splendidly and fluently ; besides, by an imitation of the best models, we learn to think for ourselves. Many of the beauties in authors, merely on reading them,

may escape our notice, which cannot happen to us in translating them; and thus we increase our knowledge, and improve our judgment." *

Abuse of the Great.

Those who too minutely examine, and too severely condemn, the foibles and vices of persons of rank and opulence, do not know the circumstances of the persons, and from want of candour do not take care to speak with proper caution. The fact is, every man of rank and fortune is bred in a hotbed of flatterers and false friends, who live by the vices which they encourage in their patron. Let any one look round in the neighbourhood of his own village, and he will find that the lord and rich squire, who reigns the petty tyrant of his realms, is often surrounded by the worst people in it, whom he justly calls his *dear* friends. Indeed no virtuous man will approach him; for virtue and the love of independence go hand in hand.

Abuse of Speech.

"Truth† is to be found and supported by a mature and due consideration of things themselves, and not by artificial terms and ways of arguing. These lead men not so much into the discovery of truth,

* Seventh Book, 9th Epist.

† Locke on Education, p. 287.

as into a captious and fallacious use of doubtful words, which is the most useless and most offensive way of talking, and such as least suits a gentleman, or a lover of truth, of any thing in the world." This manly censure of quibbling and cavilling in conversation is well directed against the ill use of rhetoric, which our witty bard has aptly ridiculed—

For all a rhetorician's rules
Teach nothing but to name his tools.

Hudibras, canto 1, p. 5.

Grammar.

When we hear foolish or unlearned men talk of the dulness and inutility of the labours of grammarians, we do not wonder or feel at all interested in such absurdities. We indeed are surprised that such men as Swift and Pope should endeavour to deny the merit of such men as Bentley, Burmanus, &c. and that they did not check their wit and their malice by the considerations on, and conviction of, the utility of such studies. Every wise man knows, that the connection between language, and the human understanding and knowledge, is very close. In proof of this, we may recollect the ancient philosophers often joined to their speculations on scientific subjects deep researches into the ground-work of grammar. See Ham's *Hermes*.

Duc de Rochefoucault.

When this acute author declares that "few persons would fall in love, if they had not heard of it," he must mean the higher kind of this passion, viz. the *sentimental*, as it is called; where a man prefers one woman, out of many equally handsome, for some mental accomplishment or disposition. In respect to the common passion between the sexes, an idiot is as well, if not more, acquainted with it, than the most learned man.

Ancient Philosophers.

There seems a wonderful deal of cant among the sages of antiquity, especially the sect of Stoics. To make themselves conspicuous, and as they thought superior, to the rest of mankind, they pretended to despise honours, wealth, and pleasures. Seneca talked in this manner in his writings, "ad captandum vulgus;" but lived in magnificent buildings, walked in luxurious and extensive gardens of his own, and no doubt laughed at his brothers in this canting philosophy.

They praise old Cato, and admire his fate,
But in their lives they Clodius imitate.

Juvenal.

Explainers and Demonstrators.

These are very troublesome persons in company, who on every subject go into the minutest details, and leave nothing to the audience to find out themselves. Such persons are considered as arrogant and pedantic, as they injure the self-love of every one who hears them, by being too didactic and instructive; as Falstaff says, "No reasons upon compulsion, Hal;" we like a man to give us instruction by hints and half speeches; this flatters us with a 'verbum sat sapienti.'

Witty Persons.

As in the French drama all the characters are eloquent, so in Congreve all or most of his personages are witty, and do not "bear their faculties very meekly." Wives (to use a well-known phrase) quiz their husbands, nieces their uncles, and servants their masters. Such company, for a grave man, is rather formidable, where joking is argument, and ribaldry good sense. Shakespeare has taught us how to demean ourselves, should we fall in among such a gang.

He whom a *fool* doth very wisely hit,
Doth very foolishly, (although he smart,)
Not to seem senseless of the bob; if not,
The wise man's folly is anatomized,
E'en by the squandering glances of a fool.

N. B. It may be right to observe, that in Shakespeare's time a fool meant a merry wag, a tremendous companion for a dull man.

The Philosophy of prolonging Life.

Addison, in one of his Spectators, observes that the oldest men of his acquaintance were persons of tranquil dispositions. Such men 'wore well,' as he expresses it. The truth of the observation was strongly exemplified in the life of M. Fontenelle, who lived within a year of a century. The following verses on his death are truly descriptive of such a man as Addison describes, and have that simplicity and fidelity to nature not very common in French verses.

Amant de la philosophie,
Il suivit sans faste ses pas,
Portant l'équerre et le compas,
Sur les demarches de la vie.
Facile et plein d'amenité,
Par un séduisant badinage
Il ornait l'austère langage,
Qui fait craindre la vérité.
D'autres occupés à paroître,
Sans tourner leurs regards sur eux,
Enseignèrent l'art d'être heureux :
Il faisait plus, il savait l'être.

IMITATED.

With rule and compass in his eye,
 To practical philosophy
 He squar'd his theoretic knowledge,
 And left the jargon of a college
 To pedants all, unskill'd to smooth
 The thorny paths that lead to truth ;
 Whilst Fontenelle, with gentle smiles,
 The reader of his fears beguiles,
 Whilst other sages vainly press
 Their maxims of true happiness ;
 Our sage more wise, more shrewd than they,
 Shew'd the example, and the way.

Philosophers in practice.

Many persons are ready enough to amuse and instruct the world with their new theories, yet are they by no means so willing to trust their lives on the strength of them. It is related by the Abbé du Bos, that M. Leibnitz would never pass a particular part of a road which his coachman had told him was dangerous. His brothers in science assured him, that from the circumstances of the shape and level of the road, the coach could not overturn according to scientific principles. The philosopher trusted to the experience of his coachman, and turned a deaf ear to the expositions of philosophers who walked on foot.

Thoughts on Female Wisdom, by a Lady.

“Seigneur Chevalier, ne me parlez jamais de la sagesse d’une femme. Je connois bien ma sexe ; la plus sage de nous toutes n’est qu’un peu moins sotte que les autres.” This was the answer of Queen Mary of Scotland to a nobleman of the English court, who was expatiating on the wisdom of Queen Elizabeth. Anger and jealousy are bad reporters of sentiments, and deserve little credit for candour or justice. The unfortunate Mary had talents equal to Queen Elizabeth, and foibles and vices which would put her on a level with Catherine de Medicis.

Quintus Curtius.

This historian of Alexander the Great is, by some learned men, supposed to be a fictitious compilation, within a few centuries back, by some Italian scholar. Others say that he lived in the time of Augustus. Some ascribe him to the reign of Tiberius, or Vespasian. However, one thing is certain, that none of the ancient writers make mention of him. Quintus Curtius is, notwithstanding, an author famous for his elegant latinity, and the good sense and pleasantry of his narrative. If it be a fiction of modern times, it is a very extraordinary imposition on scholars, and a very pleasant addition to modern literature.

Magazine Poetry.

Pope, by his example, has laid an embargo on all harsh lines; and these modern rhimes are always tuneful, if not always intelligible. Some critic of eminence has said that obscurity is one source of the sublime, and these *monthly* votaries of the Muses have availed themselves of this position, for having no meaning is certainly the right road to the most palpable obscure.

"Their verses run in smooth and gentle stream,
"Whilst readers stare, and wonder what's the theme."

Learning and Knowledge.

By those who have not well considered the difference between these two things, and who set out with diligence and love of labour in the literary mine, much crude pedantry is produced. Such labourers, indeed, by means of time and strong machines bring up a great deal of ore, but have not the skill to separate the dross from the useful mineral. Much inert matter lays upon the soil, a useless manure, which, to use the words of a comic,* "loads the ground it was intended to fertilize."

* Sheridan's Comedy.

Good-Humour.

The most lovely part of the female character is urbanity. The ancient poets described Venus as the goddess of smiles; and consigned all "frowns" and ill-humours to the old ladies, the "Furies." M. Fontenelle, when past eighty years, was adjusting a part of the dress of a young beauty, who repaid the philosopher's attentions with a terrific frown. "Madame," said the old sage, "you waste your anger and rigour on one past all your power of annoying him." Prudery is always suspicious; it proves too much. Woman's empire is founded on pleasing. The prude is well chidden by the Poet:

From men we only seem to fly,
To meet them with more secrecy. *Crown's Calisto.*

Byzantine Libraries.

Some writers, though no mean scholars, are rash enough to assert that the ancients were deficient in this or that department of science or art, because we have not any of their writings on these subjects. Let such complainants recollect that this would only be a negative argument against the ancients; and that, at the overthrow of Byzantium, by Mahomet, one hundred and

twenty thousand volumes are reported to have been lost.—*Malone's Note to Dryden's Character of Polybius, vol. iv.*

Paley's Philosophy.

Amidst much plain and practical rules for life, this sensible writer has laid down one, on the forming our moral habits, that is very strikingly useful. "Accustom yourself to those pursuits, the remission of which will relax the powers of your mind, and produce an innocent degree of pleasure." "Men of pleasure," as they are improperly styled, miss their aim by too continued a pursuit of it. This avarice, or lust of amusement, disorders the susceptibility of the mind, and acts like perpetual toil. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," says the proverb: all pleasure and no work would make Jack much more dull, in a little time.

Poetic License.

To address inanimate objects, as rocks and trees, as capable of attention, has been an usage with many bards; but to expect them to answer to our complaints, or to tell others to expect it, is carrying the poetic license rather too far. Guarini is the bold man to do this.

Ch' 'I t' ami piu della vita
 Se tu nol sai crudele
 Chiededilo a queste Sylve
 Che t' il diranno et ti 'l diran con esse
 Le fere loro e i duri sterpi e sesse
 Di questi alpestri monti
 Ch' 'I ho si spessee volte
 Inteneriti al suon de' mei lamenti.

Pastor Fido, act iii. scene 3.

IMITATED.

Ah! cruel, will you not believe
 That you are dearer far to me
 Than life itself? To yonder grove
 Repair, and ask each shrub and tree,
 How oft their boughs have whisper'd loud,
 My heart-felt groans? and ask the deer,
 That oft have heard my plaintive song,
 And left their grass awhile to hear;
 Nay ask the rocks, for they relent,
 Long soften'd by my plaints and sighs,
 Their marble sides are tender grown,
 And echo back my piteous cries.

Writing Letters.

How often do we hear persons, well educated, talk of the difficulty and irksomeness of writing a letter, and do not seem to feel that these complaints are disgraceful to them, or rather to their teachers. An eminent philosopher has expressed himself strongly, and justly, on this neglect in education. "The writing of a letter has so much to do in all the occurrences of life, that no gentleman can avoid shewing himself in this kind of writing.

Occasions will daily force him to make this use of his pen, which, besides the consequences that in his affairs his well or ill managing of it draws after it, always lays him open to a severer examination of his breeding, sense, and abilities."—*J. Locke on Education*, p. 290.

Arithmetic.

Many a man who has been bred at a public school, has, in after life, heavily regretted his negligence of this art; "which," as Locke says, "is the easiest, and consequently the first sort of abstract reasoning which the mind commonly bears, or accustoms itself to; and is of so general use in all parts of life and business, that scarce any thing is to be done without it. This is certain, a man cannot have too much of it, or too perfectly. He should begin, therefore, to be exercised in counting as soon and as far as he is capable of it, and do something in it every day till he is master of the art of numbers."—*Ibid*, p. 277.

The Abuse of Logic.

As making speeches (on all occasions, and in places which it may be needless to mention) seems a foible observable in the present age, the following observations of the same philosopher may be worth attention. "If the use and end of right

reasoning be to have right notions and a right judgment of things, to distinguish betwixt truth and falsehood, and to act accordingly, be sure not to let your son be bred up in the art of disputing, either practising it himself or admiring it in others; unless, instead of an able man, you desire to have him an insignificant wrangler, opiniated in discourse, and priding himself in contradicting others, or what is worse, thinking there is no such thing as truth to be sought, but only victory, in disputing.”
— *Ibid.*

Continued.

In another place, this excellent philosopher says, “ In short, the way and perfection of logical disputes is that the opponent never takes any answer, nor the respondent ever yields to any argument. This neither of them must do, whatever becomes of truth and knowledge, unless he will pass for a poor baffled wretch, and lie under the disgrace of not being able to maintain whatever he has once affirmed, which is the great aim and glory in disputing.”—*Locke on Edu. p. 286.*

Satellites in this Lower World.

As the luminous bodies in the regions above have their attendant stars of inferior lustre, so it is on earth. In our days, Gray had his Mason,

Hume his Adam Smith, Warburton his Hurd, Dr. Johnson his Boswell, &c. They all seemed to acknowledge their borrowed lights, and to have been happy to move in orbits of which the greater luminous bodies formed the centre, and to have quietly undergone the state of eclipse, whenever their stars of greater magnitude chose to cover them with the shade and darkness of larger discs. When a man submits to the superior talents of another only in common things, we are very candid to his humility; but in cases of religion and morals, all this reverence to another's opinion is weak and unmanly.

A singular Recantation (intended).

Thomson, the author of the Seasons, was of a most ingenuous disposition, which the following anecdotes will shew in a very strong light, as it is told by his ingenious countryman. "Thomson was so often put to the blush for the undeserved incense which he had offered in the heat of an enthusiastic disposition, misled by popular applause, that he had resolved to retract, in his last will, *all* the encomiums which he had thus prematurely bestowed, and to stigmatize the unworthy by name:—a laudable scheme of poetical justice; the execution of which was fatally prevented by

untimely death."—*Preface to the Miscellaneous Works of Tobias Smollet, M. D. Edinburgh, 1817, 6 vols. 8vo.*

Solitude.

A man who has few or no resources within himself to fill up the chasm that want of society occasions, and yet is desirous of solitude, acts no better than he who should purchase a large empty house, and is too poor in purse to put any furniture in it. The mansion must soon go to ruin. A man who quits the world, should manage as a skilful general does on leaving the main body of the enemy, have some little places with friends before him, and on both sides to secure his retreat. A few quiet and rational neighbours are sufficient to him who in solitude,

Exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.
As You Like It.

Second-Hand Wits.

There are many men in society who, without one grain of imagination, one spark of ingenuity, gain the character of men of wit, at the expense of others. Their memories are good, though their invention is barren, and their garrulity and animal

spirits elevate them to the regions of fancy. Our great poet had seen them—

This fellow picks up wit, as pigeons pease ;
And utters it again, when Jove doth please :
He is wit's pedlar, and retails his wares
At wakes and wassels, meetings, markets, fairs ;
And we, that sell by gross, the Lord doth know,
Have not the grace to grace it with such show.

Love's Labour Lost, act v. scene 2.

Modern Figure of Composition.

Nothing seems to have escaped the prying eye and satiric wit of the great bard of our island. The trick in composition, so great a favourite with Dr. Johnson, Gibbon, and other inferior imitators of these wide-mouthed orators, is well *taken off* in the following panegyric of the Curate, in the eloquence of Holofernes, the schoolmaster. *Nathaniel*—"I praise God for you, Sir: your reasons* at dinner have been sharp and sententious; pleasant without scurrility, witty without affection,† audacious without impudency, learned without opinion,‡ and strange without heresy.§" This jingling antithetical mode of writing is now become so common, that it is hoped that the fashion will soon give room to something new, and at least as witty and elegant.

* Discourses. † Affectation. ‡ Opiniativeness.

§ *Love's Labour Lost, act v. scene 1.*

Morals.

When any sect of religionists puts aside morals as no part of their religious system, it is high time for the magistrate to be upon his guard. The sect is now new, if we may credit these lines in *Hudibras*, whose author was no novice in these manners, and no dull observer of his times.

What makes morality a crime,
The most notorious of the time;
Morality, which both the saints,
And wicked too, cry out against?
'Cause grace and virtue are within
Prohibited degrees of sin,
And therefore no true *saint* allows
They should be suffer'd to espouse;
For saints can need no conscience,
That with morality dispense;
As virtue's impious, when tis rooted
In nature only, and not imputed.
But why the wicked should do so
We neither know, nor care to do.

Hudibras, third part, canto 1.

Love of Novelty.

There is in some writer an ingenious reason assigned to this passion, viz. "our dislike of any thing old, because it reminds us of our decay, and final exit from the world." Upon this ground, perhaps, the recommendation of an ancient great

philosopher arose, of recommending the company of the young. Perhaps on this ground, also, is built the universal craving for newspapers and novels, merely because they are new.

Varieties of Disposition.

Some men are of such easy tempers, that they become ductile to every opinion and humour; and others are so perverse, that they accommodate themselves to none. The latter reminds us of a rusty weathercock, which is moveable by no wind but a storm; and the other is so much at the mercy of every opposite gale, that he is always in motion.

Association of Ideas.

This philosophical axiom accounts for many a thing which must otherwise seem a mere phenomenon. Mr. D—, in the latter part of his life, furnished his house with tables, chairs, &c. of the most antique structure, I cannot say fashion; and he defended himself before his more genteel neighbours, by saying that he was fond of seeing the faces of his contemporaries. His wife, indeed, made some objection to the practice as well as the theory, till she had discovered a remarkably good looking-glass in a very old frame, in which not only her face but her figure was fully displayed.

Persuasion.

There is no more effectual way of using a superior understanding than the most gentle one. Persons of different opinions with you will oppose you with all their might, not because they differ with you essentially on the point, but because you endeavour to conquer them by force. There are many trees that will break, but not bend to the most furious tempests. Every man has his share of vanity, and whatever opinions he may advance, he will continue to support them against violent and arrogant opponents. The Bard to whom nature has discovered her secrets, has made "Falstaff" say, even to his prince,

"No reasons upon compulsion, Hal."

Old Men

Are very often unjustly accused of avarice, because they live very much within their income; yet they are not called lazy, because they take less exercise than they did when younger; or too sparing of their lungs, when they speak less loudly than formerly. The fact is, old men are less expensive, because their sumptuary pleasures are lower, and their passions more sluggish in the pursuit of indulgencies. Young men, though often as penurious in disposition as old men, yet,

from their activity and passions, pursue more ardently their amusements, and they are of course more expensive; as the buyers are more numerous "at vanity fair" than the sellers.

National Schools.

This extensive mode of propagating literature among all ranks and degrees of persons may not be attended with those hopes of advantage that the promoters of it no doubt imagine. Plato relates, that when the Athenian people grew more fond of reading, and had more opportunities for it, they became orators and legislators, and every one wished to govern, and no one to be governed; or, in the short expressive words of the original, "Ἡπαντων ἐν παντα σοφιας δοξα και παρανομια."—*Plato de Legibus, lib. 3.*

Language often capable of misleading our Conjectures.

It is roundly asserted by some theorists in the difficult philosophy of language, that we may judge of the manners and disposition of natives by the words in use among them. Two striking instances occur, which are hostile to this theory. The word *exclusive* seems a phrase peculiar to the English, if not exclusive; and yet the English are

represented as a surly, rough, and froward people. Our very *sprightly* neighbours on the Continent seem to have the exclusive claim to the term *cauxxi*, though they are supposed to be the most urbane and *lively* nation "*dans tout le monde*," as they say of themselves.

Boswell and Johnson.

On a first view of the subject, we are surprised that the mercurial spirit of Boswell should have so well amalgamated with the saturnine temper of Johnson. It may be said, indeed, that the respectful behaviour of Boswell to his "philosopher and friend," might have rendered the Doctor's conduct to his adult pupil, at times, gentle and even kind. Yet Boswell often complains that Johnson, *in company*, would "toss him." But, perhaps, in private life, like man and wife, they saw the good policy of mutual forbearance, in a *tête à tête*. A vain man (as Johnson, though a very great genius, certainly was) lost in private that stimulus of praise and admiration which a large company would naturally excite, and carry beyond the courtesy of good manners. We find, in Horace, that it was in a private party his friend Lælius displayed his *mitis sapientia*.*

* Book ii. sat. 1, Horat.

Greek Plays.

We moderns lose much of the entertainment derived from the Greek dramas, from the want of the music and scenery which Aristotle* has considered as the most delightful parts of them. Their sentiments are yet sufficiently plain and instructive, but their dialogues are seldom animated by characteristic manners. The little variety in their subjects is another check in our amusements to be derived from them; and the bombastic phraseology both of Euripides and Sophocles too much reminds us of the *writers*, when we wish to hear the appropriate language of the actors. These dramas contain many passages of pathos and dignified sentiment, but have little to recommend them as dramatic compositions. We read them as moral poems with the best effect.

French Dramas.

The *French*, who are more pedantic imitators of the classics than might be suspected from the general character of the nation, write poems rather than dramas. Aristotle (in the chapter before quoted) maintains that there were two ways in which the diction of the drama was carried on; first, the familiar mode of speaking; second, the

* Poetics, c. 6.

oratorical or declamatory; and says, the latter became in his time the most popular. In the French plays, the oratorical speeches in Corneille and Racine are very fine and sententious, or, to use the Gallic phrase, very "superb," but very long, very tedious, and very undramatic. In England, the inimitable Shakespeare gives us true examples of appropriate language. James Thomson (who, tho' a good poet, was little endowed with a genius for theatric composition) exhibits a very heavy proof how slightly mere declamation can animate the feelings of an audience or a reader. The 'Cato' of Addison, and the 'Irene' of Johnson, are fine moral poems, rather than dramas.

Character of Aristotle's Writings and Genius.

A very bold, but very sublime and very appropriate, description is given from an anonymous author in 'Suidas,' of this most illustrious ornament of Greek philosophy. "Aristotle was the secretary of nature, and dipped his pen in intellect." It was an happy coincidence in the mode of thinking, if Mr. Garrick had never seen the above, when he described the 'Bard,' whom he so ably illustrated by his action. "Shakespeare," said this inimitable actor, "dipped his pen in the human heart."

Bulies in Conversation.

Many men are ready to 'vail their bonnets' to the loud and impetuous orator, whose hardy assertions and dogmatical harangues are grounded merely on the strength of his lungs, and his invincible impudence. The same auditors would feel little influence from the flashes of the speeches of a man of genius, should his sentiments be delivered with modesty and calmness. Such an audience reminds us of many persons, who are as little of philosophers as the others who tremble at the noise of thunder, but seem careless and unguarded, when

"The vollied lightnings threaten instant death."

Politeness.

Why men swerve from this golden rule in society, is not that they are ignorant of its meaning, but that they do not like to comply with it. Let a man behave to others with the same gentleness and complaisance that he loves in their conduct, and he would be a very polite man. We do not want a Lord Chesterfield to enter into minute circumstances, when we have all the principles in our own bosoms; but vanity, pride, and other irregular passions will interfere, and prevent us from being that character we so much admire in others.

Petrarch's Sonnets.

These very elegant but very dispassionate love elegies of the Italian author, have given occasion to very different opinions of him. Some critics have said that his mistress was ideal, and his passion possessed nothing real but the lady's name. Others have supposed that his head, rather than his heart, supplied these metaphysical effusions, and that he borrowed his notions of love from his master Plato. His fame, however, as an elegant poet, is established, whatever becomes of his ardour as a lover. Waller has a pretty thought, taken from the story of Apollo pursuing Daphne, and enraged by her coyness, turning his mistress into a laurel, and applies it to some unsuccessful lover, and excellent poet of his time: "he lost his mistress," says Waller, "but filled his arms with bays."

Sympathy.

The famous Dr. Adam Smith, in his Theory of Moral Sentiment, has, with much sagacity and freedom of thought, stated how little sympathy those experience from their hearers, who relate their amorous sorrows. "We are interested," says this cool philosopher, "by the situations in

which the passion may probably place the lover as to hope, fear, and distresses of every kind. The author who should introduce two lovers in a scene of perfect security, expressing their mutual fondness for each other, would excite laughter, but not sympathy." The author of *Hudibras* seems to have held the same opinion of the exhibition of such a scene, which he so ludicrously describes on an English coin—

Still amorous, and fond, and billing,
Like Philip and Mary on a shilling.

Canto 1. third part.

Adulteries.

As in this age of reason and piety adulterers and adulteresses often go unpunished, and contract fresh marriages, &c. the following account, from a Pagan, of our ancestors may surprise, if it does not instruct or correct us. "The laws of matrimony were observed with great strictness. Examples of adultery were extremely rare, and punished with much severity. The husband of an adulteress, in the presence of her relations, cut off her hair, stripped her almost naked, turned her out of his house, and whipped her from one end of the village to the other. A woman who had been thus exposed never recovered her character; and

neither youth, beauty, nor riches, could ever procure her another husband.—*Tacitus de Mor. Germanorum*, lib. 18, 19, 20.

Preparatory Studies to History.

Lectures on the science of morals would be an useful preparatory study to history, so that a young person may know something of human nature in the abstract. Without this previous exercise of the mind, the student in history is totally at the mercy of the historian, who may, or may not, be a man conversant with his fellow-creatures, whose actions he has undertaken, not only to relate, but to make his comment upon. Gibbon, with much erudition and acuteness, seems to take his notions of the motives of his characters from satirical writers, such as Tacitus and Rochefoucault, and seems, in too many passages of his History, misanthropical.

Economy.

Many persons have incurred the disgraceful charge of too strict an economy by being born with a philosophic disposition of contemning "the gewgaws of this nether world." Such men are naturally averse from wanton expenditure, but are often accused of penury. It is related of the sage

whom the oracles of Greece pronounced to be the wisest of men, that in passing through a fair, he exclaimed, on viewing the splendid objects around him, "How many things are there, of which I feel no want!" Every independent man will think, with respect to wanton expense, with the poet and Socrates,

Who yieldeth unto pleasures and to lust,
Is a poor captive, that in golden fetters
And precious, as he thinks, but holding gyves,
Frets out his life.

Beaumont and Fletcher's Knight of Malta.

Characters formed by Situation.

The great Edmund Burke said, on a celebrated trial before the House of Commons, that morality seemed to him to depend on latitudes, and to be in great measure geographical. The human character is often the offspring of situation. Take a woman of a "certain age," with a small income, she is a most exemplary character; chaste, frugal, humble, and pious. Let fortune put a coronet on her head, place her in a large square in London, with an ample fortune, and possessed of a palace, that woman's whole *machinery* of character and manners will be changed in a few weeks. She will hardly be able to recollect herself; and should you call on her, she certainly will not recollect you.

I see, men's judgments are
 A parcel of their fortunes; and things outward
 Do draw the inward quality after them,
 To suffer all alike.

Anthony and Cleopatra, act iii, scene 11.

Gothic Architecture.

Whilst the student is employed in tracing the chronological differences in Gothic structures of various ages, which have in one case adopted the pointed, and in another the circular, arch to windows or doors, &c. the point which can instruct us in the art is forgotten. The diligence and taste of Gray or Bentham cannot recommend such studies but as amusements. He who shall, on the comparison of the various styles, at different periods, fix the principles common to them all, might instruct future builders to imitate those parts in each, which have their best recommendations of strength, usefulness, and beauty, the only groundwork of taste.

Dr. Warton's Essay on Pope.

This is a most delightful manual of young students in polite literature. Learning, feeling, candour, and good taste, lay the foundation of this excellent treatise. The various quotations from different authors, the apposite applications of them to the principles laid down, and the many most

amusing anecdotes of the authors introduced in this work, confer on it the greatest recommendation that any volumes can boast, viz. that they mix ample instruction with variety of pleasures. The "*miscuit utile dulci*" should be the motto, as it is the merit, of this elegant code of criticism.

A Happy Illustration.

Plutarch, in a "Letter of Consolation to his Wife," speaks of unnecessary shews of sorrow, as they contribute much to exasperate the real calamity. "When a man's eye is in pain, he is not suffered to touch it, though the inflammation provoke him to do it, nor will they who are near him meddle with it. But he who is galled with grief, sits and exposes his distemper to every one, like waters, that all may poach in; and so that which at first seemed a slight itching, or trivial smart, by much fretting and provoking, becomes a great and incurable disease."

A New Pleasure.

It is reported that the Emperor Tiberius offered a great reward to any one who would invent a new pleasure. When the younger Richardson, the painter, called on Pope with his father at Twickenham, the poet shewed them a large col-

lection of pamphlets written against himself and his writings. "These," said Mr. Pope to my father, "are my favourite reading." 'I could not help thinking,' said the younger Richardson, 'were this true, that Mr. Pope had found out a new pleasure.'—*Richardsoniana*.

Sacred Poems.

The attempt, in sacred subjects, to add to their force and impression by fresh poetical imagery, seems, to common sense, a most hazardous experiment. Boileau, a man more remarkable, perhaps, for his good sense, than his imagination, and so more likely to be right on such a subject, says, in his *Art of Poetry*, chant iii. v. 193, &c.

De la fol; d' un chretien les mysteres terribles
D' ornemens egayés ne sont point susceptibles.
L' Evangile à l'esprit n' offre de tous cotés
Que penitence à faire et tourmens merités;
Et de vos fictions le melange coupable
Même à ses verités donne l'air de la fable.
Et quel object enfin à presenter aux yeux
Que le Diable toujours hurlant contre les cieux,
Qui de votre heros veut rabaisser la gloire,
Et souvent avec Dieu balance la victoire!

Ancient and Modern Patrons of the Fancy.

The Roman gladiators bear the same difference to the modern boxers, that gamecocks, armed

with steel or only with their natural spurs, may be supposed to convey to a modern *virtuoso* in this art. Modern fists do not seem to want the aid of the *cestus* to make them more formidable, and in some instances more fatal, to their adversaries. Nor did the ancients boast of a more genteel set of spectators, ladies and gentlemen, than our modern heroes can boast. The following lines of a Greek epigram may shew that in ancient times, as well as now, a boxer was a very formidable man on any occasion.

A BAD TENANT (from the Greek of Palladus).

I let my house the other day
To one who dealt in corn and hay:
Next morn I found, ah! woe is me,
A dreadful pugilist is he.
When will you pay my rent, quoth I;
He lifts his fist, and cocks his eye.
I then to Pollux* made my vow,
That tho' on peace my thoughts were now,
That I, before next Quarter-day,
Might learn to box, or run away.

Poets.

These sons of Apollo have never been considered as remarkable for "bearing their faculties so meekly." My Lord Bacon† seems to found their pretensions to high thoughts of their art, and by

* Pollux, one of the hero-gods or demi-gods of antiquity, and a great patron of the "fancy."—See *Spence's Polymetis*.

† Lord Bacon's Advancement of Learning.

an easy transition of themselves on the operation of the art itself. "It (poetry) raises the mind by submitting the shews of things to our desires, instead of bowing the mind to the nature of things." And afterwards, the philosopher almost vindicates the pretensions of poets. "In poesy, a more stately greatness of things, a more perfect order, a more beautiful variety delights the soul, than can be found in nature since the Fall." Our greatest Bard has poetised this same sentiment, in strains equal to the subject.

"The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,

"Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;

" - - - - - "And gives to airy nothing

"A local habitation and a name."

A Genteel Man.

This is a person, who, in the common acceptation of the term, dresses well, bows well, and speaks softly. He is, before his superiors, more than humble, and more than civil: amongst his equals, he very much relaxes from his former habits; and though he cannot "stand upright" before a man of quality, he is considered to exhibit a figure rather too perpendicular among his equals, &c. In short, a *genteel* man is so lavish of his attentions, his air, and his graces, to honour the great, that he has no civility left for the rest of his acquaintance.

Picturesque Views.

How far the pleasure of viewing the finest prospect is animated by the recollection of the glorious fame of its former inhabitants, is beautifully and sublimely set forth by a modern traveller in Italy. "Even the gigantic features of America, its interminable forests, and its mountains that touch the skies, its sea-like lakes, and its volcanoes that seem to thunder in another world, may excite wonder, but can awaken little interest, and certainly inspire no enthusiasm. But if a Plato or a Pythagoras had visited their recesses, in pursuit of knowledge; if a Homer or a Virgil had peopled them with ideal tribes, with heroes, or with phantoms; then they would excite and acquire a title to the attention of travellers."

Tunc sylvæ, tunc antra loqui, tunc vivere fontes,
Tunc sacer horror aquis, adytisque effunditur Echo
Clarius, et doctæ spirant præsagia rupes.

Claudian, 6 com.

Classical Tour through Italy, in 1802, 3d ed. p. 815.

The Lapidary Style.

The ancients, in their composition of epitaphs, used a species of measured prose. The most accurate account of this style of writing is given by Cicero, in the second book of his "Orator."
"Omnium sententiarum gravitate, omnium ver-

borum ponderibus est utendum. Accedat oportet, oratio varia, vehemens, plena animi, plena spiritûs, plena veritatis.' Sentiments and expressions of weight should be used in these compositions; to which should be added a style various, full of intellect, and spirit, and vigour, and truth. It will occur to the reader, that Dr. Johnson's epitaph in St. Paul's owes some of its best expressions to this quotation from Cicero.

Lawyers.

That ambi-dexterity with which these persons take both sides of a question, with equal readiness, is well described, and justly censured, by the honest and sensible Quintilian. "I will suppose," says he, "what is repugnant to nature, that a man with the worst heart may have the finest tongue, yet I will deny that such a man is an orator; for every man that has a strong arm cannot be called a man of courage, because courage cannot exist without virtue. And has not the man who pleads for the interest of another occasion for an honesty, that no passion can corrupt, no interest can bias or impair? But shall we bestow the name of an orator upon a traitor, a runagate, and shuffler?" Cicero, who was a practical lawyer, and of the "Academicsect," in many places of his "Character of an Orator," approves of this shuffling, &c.

Absurd Epithets.

When a quality is given by an epithet to a subject which by nature it cannot possess, the imagery strikes our reason as absurd.

In Pope's Elegy on an Unfortunate lady, the line which describes the *wing* of an angel is highly improper.

"While angels with their *silver* wings o'ershade."

A *metallic wing* could not belong to any living being, or communicate motion to it. Commentators have endeavoured to extricate Pope from this error by saying that the poet meant by the word *silver* to describe *white* wings. Pope's master, Dryden, talks equally absurdly of a *silver* bow; and we do not wonder that, by such authority, a modern authoress was led astray, when she begins a sonnet

"Queen of the *silver* bow!"

Perhaps Mrs. Smith might have meant by silver the *pale* colour of the *ash*, yet such poetic liberties are very licentious.

Love in Old Age. Bon Mot.

It is a saying among sage matrons, that it is better to be an old man's darling than a young man's mistress; which proverb is, no doubt, founded on the experience that the love of old

persons is excessive dotage. A lively French writer, speaking of love in old age, used to say, that the amorous passion resembled the small-pox ; as the later both disorders attacked the patient, the worst sort always discovered itself in each malady.

Modern Critics.

No persons can act more fairly than these judges of an author's merit, as they not only give their opinions of another's productions and offer to correct them, but often give you specimens of their own talents on the subject. When Milbourne began his attack on Dryden's translation of some passages in Virgil, he boldly appealed to the public on the justice of his criticisms, and for his claim to the character of a scholar and poet, by giving samples of his own translation. Pope called Milbourne, for this reason, the " fairest of critics."

History.

Sir Nicholas Bacon, lord keeper of the great seal in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, conceived a plan in her father's time, of founding a seminary of ministers of state out of the revenues of the dissolved monasteries. The plan was laid before the King. After enumerating the languages to be taught in this seminary to qualify the students for situations as ambassadors, others

of the students were to be employed in writing the history of the national transactions, both at home and abroad; including, particularly, embassies, treaties, arraignments, and state trials; but, before they were permitted to write on these subjects, they were to take an oath, before the Lord Chancellor, that they would do it truly, without respect of persons, and without any corrupt views. This design, however, *miscarried*.—*Gen. Biog. Dict.* by Alexander Chalmers.

Ridicule the Test of Truth.

This popular and dangerous position of my Lord Shaftesbury has long stood its ground, partly from the obscurity of the terms in which it is couched. But a writer,* whose understanding no sophistry could confound, has placed the absurdity of this position in a clear light. “If ridicule be applied to any position as the test of truth, it will then become a question whether such ridicule be just; and this can only be decided by the application of truth as the test of truth.” Here, to use a vulgar phrase, the cart is put before the horse, and the jester made judge and jury in his own cause. Of this excellent writer’s observation we may say, with the Poet,

* *Lives of the Poets*, vol. 4, Akenaside.

Why, that's the way to choak a gibing spirit,
 Whose influence is begot of that loose grace,
 Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools:
 A jest's prosperity lies in the ear.
 Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
 Of him that makes it. *Love's Labour Lost.*

Philology and the Belles Lettres.

Since the revival of letters, too much honour has been given to the studies of the Latin and Greek languages, inasmuch as they have been called exclusively erudition. A writer who was an eminent classical scholar himself, has placed philology in its proper rank. "To what purpose doth a man fill his head with Latin and Greek words, with histories, opinions, and customs, &c. if it doth not contribute to make him more rational, more prudent, more civil, more virtuous and religious? Such occupations are to be considered as introductory, and ornamental, and serviceable to studies of higher importanee, such as philosophy, law, ethics, politics, and divinity. To abandon these sciences in order to support philology, is like burning a city to save the gates."—*Dr. Jortin's Life of Erasmus.*

Charles I. of England.

My Lord Clarendon observes that the cause of the troubles which broke out in the reign of this

monarch, was owing to a notion that was entertained and reported by many, viz. of his intention, to reclaim the Church lands given away by Henry VIII. and to restore them to the Church. This occasioned a rumour that Charles was about to re-establish the Catholic worship, and to destroy the schism which Henry, and James his father, had established. This account appears very singular, and worthy of remark, as no other French or Italian writers, on the subject of the troubles of England, or any other English historian, have mentioned it.—*Melanges d'Histoire et de Littérature, par M. de Vigneale. Marville, 1700. Rouen, 1 vol.*

Quere, if Lord Clarendon reports this, as the French writer mentions, in any passage or volume of his history?

A singular Criticism.

A French author had written several very heavy dramatic pieces, which had very little favour shewn them by the public, yet he still persisted in writing for the stage. In a large company, he entered on the defence of his last comedy, and said, that in spite of all the severe criticisms which had assailed his play, he was yet happy to say, that the audience did not hiss the performance. “My dear sir,” said a critic, who had been pre-

sent at the comedy, "people cannot hiss and yawn at the same time."

Wicked Men.

The following observation on the censure most galling to these persons, is taken from a French dramatic author,* and shews he was qualified to instruct his audience, and is worthy of Moliere. "To shew our aversion to wicked men, flatters their self-love and consequence, as it implies some dread of them mixed with it: the best method to humble these pests of society, is to turn them into ridicule." So says our great moral bard :

Safe from the bar, the pulpit, and the throne,
And touch'd and sham'd by ridicule alone. *Pope.*

A Young Author.

M. Danchet† was very kind to young authors, and would give them good advice. Once a young man brought him a copy of verses on the "Misfortunes of his Mistress." It had this line in the beginning,

* Philippe N. Destouches, author of several comedies, died at Paris 1754.

† M. Danchet, French academician, and a writer of operas, died in Paris 1748.

"Maison,* qui renfermez l'objet de mon amour."

"Suppose," said M. D. "you put instead of *house*, too common a term, *palace*, or fair *residence*." "True, sir," said the young man, "but she was in a *bridewell*." "Oh then," said the critic, "*house* is good enough."

The Duke of Marlborough and Mr. Dennis.

The good fortune of Mr. Dennis's play of "Angir, or Liberty asserted," had gained success by the many abusive passages on the French, with whom we were then at war. At the making of the peace, Dennis called on his friend the Duke of Marlborough, and begged his interest with his Grace that the plenipotentiaries might not give him (Mr. D.) up to the French King. The Duke gravely and drily told him, his danger might not be so great as he thought, for he had not himself applied to the plenipotentiaries, and yet he believed that he had done the French as much damage as Mr. Dennis.

Attention. Hints to Young Students in Law.

A more true and lively account of this excellent habit of the mind cannot easily be found, than the following extract from Howel. "I desire to

* O house, that hidest the object of my love.

know how you like Plowden:* I heard it often said, that there is no study requires patience and constancy more than the common law, for it is a good while before one comes to any known perfection in it, and consequently to any gainful practice in it. This, I think, made Jack Chander throw away his Littleton, like him, when he could not catch a hare—'A pox upon her, she is dry, tough meat; let her go.' It is not so with you," &c.

Howel's Famil. Letters, vol. ii. l. 9.

An ambiguous and ingenious Compliment.

"Ubi est multum phantasie parum est fortunæ," says a Latin proverb, which may be rendered, Wits are generally poor, and men of fancy are seldom fond of money. Fleetwood,† the Recorder of London in Queen Elizabeth's time, having occasion to speak to the citizens, and desirous to conciliate their good will, "Gentlemen," said the courteous orator, "when I consider your wit, I admire at your great wealth."

Howel's Letters, b. 4, letter 9.

* Plowden, the great lawyer.

† A. Wood says, "Fleetwood was a learned man, but of a marvellous merry and pleasant conceit."

Origin of the Variety of Languages.

Perhaps the sagacious though quaint Howell has as well, if not better, than more learned men, framed his conjecture on this dark point. "Your Lordship knows that there be divers meridians and climes; and as they make men differ in the ideas and conceptions in the mind, so in the motion of the tongue, in the tune and tones of the voice, they come to differ one from the other. Now all languages at first were imperfect, confused sounds, then came they to be syllables, then words, then speeches and sentences, which by practice, by tradition, and a kind of natural instinct from parents to children, grew to be fixed."

*Howell's Fam. Letters, vol. ii. letter 61, to the
Right Hon. E. R.*

Envy, an Anecdote.

This passion is apt, in most minds, to take shame to itself, and try to hide its real character under false pretences. Mr. D— was telling a friend, (subject to this influenza,) that he had lately built a house, and described its beauties with some degree of hobby-horsical pleasure. The auditor sighed loudly, and putting on the most amiable countenance in his power, and adopting the most

gentle accents in correspondence to it, exclaimed, "Pray tell me, my dear friend, have you built the staircase wide enough to convey your coffin down safely."—*See also Dr. Johnson's answer to David Garrick at his villa, in Boswell's Life of him.*

Ancient and Modern Suicides.

How different are the causes of modern and ancient self-murder. The Grecian and Roman hero, and the modern suicide—the Roman killed himself, because he had been unfortunate in war; the Englishman, because he has been unlucky at the gaming-table: the old hero, because he had disgraced his country; the modern, because he dare not shew his head at Brooks's: the former, because he was deprived of his glory; and the latter, because he could no more command his ortolans and his champagne: the first was encouraged by a mistaken principle of religion; the last, for want of any, &c.

Estimate of the Manners of the Times, 2 vols. 1757.

A Humorist,

Though often marked by satire and scorn, is yet often very undeserving of either censure. He is often a man of great sensibility and sense, and

wanders only from the general usages of the world, because he thinks them wrong, or because they are unproductive of any amusement to himself. The humourist is also an 'autocrat,' and competent to the production of his own happiness; and therefore does not depend on others for his enjoyment of life, but trusts to his own feelings, and his own exertions, for his happiness and his reputation. If such a man adds uncommon vivacity to the peculiarities of his character, he is called a madman; though his more sagacious neighbours will allow that there is a "method in his madness."

Commentators unqualified for their Tasks.

Nothing seems more necessary to the critic, who attempts to explain a bard of "elder time," than a knowledge of the phraseology of the contemporary writers in the author's age. Addison has been so unsuccessful in enumerating the words with which Milton has enriched our language, as perhaps not to have named one of which Milton was the author; and Dr. Bentley has yet more unhappily praised him as the introducer of those elisions into English poetry which had been used from the first essays in versification among us, and which Milton was indeed the last that practised.

Proposals for printing the Dramatic Works of Shakespeare, 1756, by Samuel Johnson.

Philosophy of Proportion.

A well-built edifice pleases, as the well-formed figure of a man or woman, from the nice proportion of parts to each other, and because such a person is (to use a word of Aristotle's Poetics) *εὐκτατονος*, or to be seen at once; whilst an unwieldy figure of a man or woman must be looked at several times, in order to comprehend its various and varying parts. The same analogy prevails in a Grecian or Palladian edifice; and the poet with much taste and elegance has spoken of the Pantheon at Rome

Mark, how the dread Pantheon stands,
Amid the domes of modern hands;
Amid the toys of idle state,
How simply, how severely great.

Akenside's Ode to Lord Huntingdon.

Flattery.

When persons say that they do not love flattery, they can only mean that they do not approve of praise, when it is excessive, or in their opinions ill bestowed; otherwise they are rejecting what ought to be the reward of virtue. Shakespeare has, in his best manner, described this coquettishness with regard to praise, as well as the general influence of it.

He loves to hear,
 That unicorns may be betray'd with trees,
 And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,
 Lions with toils, and men with flatterers :
 But, when I tell him he hates flatterers,
 He says, he does ; being then most flattered.
Julius Caesar, Act 2, scene 1.

Shakespeare and other Dramatists.

When we read a play in Shakespeare, whether it be tragedy, or whether it be comedy, we seem to be in company with real persons, who speak and use the language of persons under the influence of circumstances around them. In other writers of dramatic fame, we read the opinions, the language, and the sentiments only of the author. Let any one peruse the scenes of Corneille and Racine, and he will no doubt admire these fine orators, and be pleased, if he be not tired, with their long and ingenious speeches ; but he will seldom, as in reading our great bard, suppose himself conversing with real characters, but with the authors themselves.

Bibliomania. An Anecdote.

A century since, this rage for book-buying prevailed in France, and among very ignorant persons, whom wealth permitted to be foolish. Even the

East was ransacked for curious MSS. A lot of them arrived at the house of the purchaser, who shewed them with great ostentation to his visitors of all descriptions. Some admired the silken leaves, and their beautiful ornaments, &c. : an Arabian scholar at length inspected them. *Risum teneatis amici?* The MSS. so valuable, so far fetched, and so dear, proved to be the ledger book of accounts belonging to an Arabian merchant.—*Melanges d' Histoire et Litterature.*

This anecdote would have suited Dr. Young, as an instance, when he described a literary dunce.

On buying books Lorenzo long was bent,
And found at length that it reduc'd his rent.
His farms were flown, when lo! a sale comes on,
A choice collection ; what is to be done?
He sells his last, for he the whole will buy,
Sells e'en his house, nay, wants whereon to lie ;
So high the gen'rous ardour of the man
For Romans, Greeks, and Orientals ran.
When terms were drawn, and brought him by the clerk,
Lorenzo sign'd the bargain with his mark.

Love of Fame, Satire 2d.

Bishop Berkeley

Uses a very beautiful illustration, to state the inefficacy of vain philosophy and cavillings against revelation. "To tax and strike at this divine doctrine, on account of things foreign and adventitious, the speculations and disputes of curious

men, is in my mind an absurdity of the same kind as it would be to cut down a fine tree yielding fruit and shade, because its leaves afforded nourishment to caterpillars, or because spiders now and then weaved cobwebs amongst the branches.—*Alciphron, or the Minute Philosopher*. 8vo. *Dialogue* 6, p. 322.

N. B. Alciphron is a most elegant model of dialogue writing, and a most able defence of the Christian religion.

A noble Compliment to the Bishop of Cloyne.

Bishop Atterbury was desirous of seeing Berkeley, and was introduced to him by the Earl of Berkeley. After he had left the room, "What does your Lordship think of my cousin?" said the Earl, "Does he answer your Lordship's expectations?" The Bishop, lifting up his hands in astonishment, replied, 'So much understanding, so much knowledge, so much innocence, and so much humility, I did not think had been the portion of any but angels, till I saw this gentleman.'—*Duncombe's Letters*. Dr. Warton, *Essay on the Genius of Pope*, vol. ii. p. 259, note.

Malebranche.

Bishop Berkeley, in his travels, visited this great French metaphysician, and their discourse fell on the Bishop's celebrated system of the non-

existence of matter.* Malebranche had an inflammation in his lungs, and was found preparing a medicine in his cell, and cooking it in a small pipkin, for his disorder. The philosopher, however, exerted himself so much, and with such vivacity, in the dispute, that he increased his disorder, which carried him off in a few days.—*Biograp. Britann. vol. ii. p. 251.*

Lord Chesterfield and Machiavel.

His Lordship's Epistles to his Son, and the "Prince" of the Italian author, are melancholy proofs of the perversion of eminent knowledge and talents. Whoever reads my Lord Chesterfield's Letters will, if he be not a man of extraordinary good sense, and sound principles, learn to be very soon, in the worst sense of the word, a man of the world, who, if 'used after his deserts, shall not escape a whipping.' Machiavel's Prince would, no doubt, shew himself to be a very clever fellow; but if not born among a set of abject slaves, would soon fall shorter by the head.

Why should Cæsar be a tyrant then?
 Poor man I know he would not be a wolf,
 But that he sees the Romans are but sheep;
 He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.

Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar.

* This system has been attacked by a very ingenious, and eloquent, and witty Essay, called "On the Existence of a Material World." London, 1781.

N. B. The systems of both these authors were founded on the same broad popular basis, viz. selfishness.

Old and New Acquaintance.

Every one has felt the superior enjoyment of old acquaintance and friends over new, though, perhaps, few have enquired into the causes of this difference. The friends and acquaintances with whom we become intimate in youth, are chosen with warm passions, and little experience of the characters of mankind at large. The acquaintances of our maturer years are chosen, if not more discreetly, yet more coolly, and with a greater insight into the human mind. Hence we become more tardy in our approaches to forming any new connections, and less attached to them when we have formed them. The wax becomes too cold to take a deep impression; and a new acquaintance, at a certain time of life, seldom ripens into friendship: so sings an old bard—

Lay this unto your breast,
Old friends, like old swords, still are trusted best.
Webster's Duchess of Malsy.

Palladio.

This eminent architect relates* an anecdote of an artist, by name Baptista Maganza, who dedicated the different apartments in a gentleman's house to

* Plate 16.

several moral virtues, as Chastity, Temperance, and Honesty; so that the guests might be appointed to the room sacred to his favourite virtue. The rich and young widow would be lodged in 'Chastity,' the alderman in 'Temperance,' and the Prime Minister in 'Honesty,' &c. Palladio, among the qualifications of the same architect, adds, *he was also a poet*. What a fine subject would this anecdote have been in the hands of Addison; it might have made one of his most facetious and witty Spectators.

Bon Mot of Augustus Cæsar.

When the Trojans sent an embassy to Augustus Cæsar, to say that a *Palm** grew on the altar which they had raised to his name, and which no doubt proclaimed his future victories; "it declares also," said the Emperor sarcastically, "how seldom you burn sacrifice on my altar." Whence M. Menage† drew this story does not appear, but it accords with the witty character of Augustus, as given by Suetonius, and with the lines of Horace in book second, satire 1.

My unpolish'd lines,
Unless by chance a happy time appears,
Will never pass thro' *judging* Cæsar's ears,
Whom if you try to stroke, he's free from pride,
And kicks you off secure on ev'ry side. *Cresch.*

* Palms were given to victors in games, &c.

† Menagiana, vol. i.

An adroit Courtier.

A French Prime Minister was amusing himself in a retired apartment with trials of his activity, by jumping over some chairs and tables which he had arranged for that purpose. A gentleman was suddenly shewn the way to this apartment, and this active statesman was detected riding his hobby-horse at a violent rate. The gentleman, who was a very good courtier, immediately imitated the great man, and leaped over some of the chairs, but took care not to do it so well as the Minister. A short time after, this adroit imitator *jumped* into some good preferment.

Modern Parthians.

Those ladies who strip themselves behind, and expose their bare shoulders to angry winds, and laughing spectators, no doubt have read of the regiments of Parthian soldiers, who used to turn their backs, and fire upon the enemy in their feigned retreat from them; but being closed in the pursuit, wheeled round upon the foe, and discharged their most destructive arrows. The historians of Greece add, "The Parthians shot their arrows with equal dexterity, when their backs were turned, as when they faced the enemy."*

* Battle of Cannæ.

Dr. Franklin.

It was the practice of this cool-headed philosopher, (as is recorded in his life,) when a question was proposed to him of a complicated nature, to put down all the circumstances relative to it which he could recollect, both *pro* and *con*, and then to consider and weigh them, one by one, against each other, with as much care as possible, before he ventured to make any conclusion. It is in moral reasoning as in arithmetic; if one article be omitted in the summing up, the proof will be deficient. In general, those who write on subjects of difficulty, advocate some favourite theory, and leave out what may seem against it. So that, their opponents, using the same uncandid process, truth is neglected by both.

Ancient and Modern Experimentalists.

“To bend over a furnace inhaling noxious steams, to torture animals, or to touch dead bodies, appeared to the ancient philosophers not more unbecoming their humanity, than unsuitable to their dignity. The workshops of tradesmen then revealed those mysteries which are now sought for in colleges and laboratories; and useful knowledge was not the less likely to be advanced while the arts were confined to artists only, nor facts

more likely to be perverted, in order to support favourite theories, before the empiric assumed the name, and usurped the functions, of the philosopher."—*New Analysis of Aristotle's Works*, by John Gillies, LL. D., 1804.

A Spirited Answer to an Uncivil Question.

When the late Earl of Cadogan was sent on an embassy to Vienna, he was one day invited by Prince Eugene to be present at a review of the Austrian Cuirassiers, a fine body of troops of ten thousand men. Prince Eugene, addressing an officer who attended Lord Cadogan, asked him if he thought that any ten thousand English horse could beat those Austrians. "I do not know, Sir," replied the English officer, "whether they could or not; but I know that five thousand would try."—*Dr. King's Anecdotes of his own Life*, p. 130. London, 1818.

On a Retired Life.

Montaigne has shrewdly objected to the advice of Cicero and the younger Pliny, with respect to employing many of the hours of retirement in laborious study. "For," says the gay Frenchman, "such toil would be equally hostile to the repose of the mind, and the health of the body, as the

pursuits of riches or ambition. "Books are pleasant; but if by too much conversing with them we impair our health, and spoil our good humour, two of the best enjoyments we have, let us give it over, and quit them. I, for my part, am one of those who think that no fruit derived from them can recompense so great a loss. We are to receive (in solitude) so much occupation and employment as is necessary to keep us in breath, and to defend us from the inconveniences which the other extreme of a dull and stupid laziness brings along with it."—*Montaigne's Essays*, vol. i. c. 38.

Vanity.

This active principle of the mind, without which little good could be produced under stoical inactivity and pride, has yet many disadvantages. Great minds are often disgraced by being led through its influence into a love of praise and eminence, incompatible with integrity and honour. The following instance in Cicero, of indulging this passion, is very remarkable. In a letter of this orator to Luceius, (Epist. 12, book 5,) he makes this most degrading request to him, that the historian should mention his actions with the highest honour, and beyond what he himself thought of their merits, and what exceeded the bounds of veracity, which true history prescribes

to itself. Pliny junior, indeed, made a request to Tacitus that his name should be recorded in his history, but tells him also that he should not exceed matter of fact; adding, very justly, that history must not step beyond the boundaries of truth, and that truth was the best recorder of actions really meritorious in themselves.—*Pliny's Epist. book 7, lett. 33.*

*Bon Mot of a Lord Chancellor.**

When disputes about precedence were very high between the practisers of medicine and surgery in France, M. de Peyronie, the first surgeon, pressed the Chancellor to take the side of the surgeon, and to build (as he expressed himself) “a wall of brass between the surgeons and physicians.” ‘If we build such a wall,’ replied the Chancellor, ‘Mr. Surgeon, on which side of it shall we place the patients?’

Lucian and Cebes.

Though few English readers are conversant with these Grecian wits in their own works, yet are they much indebted to them for the pleasing instructions of their modern imitators. The “Devil

* Henri François D'Aguesseau, Lord Chancellor of France, died 1751.

upon two Sticks," of Le Sage, is an admirable copy of the Greek Dialogue, called 'Charon;' and the Tablet, of Cebes, is, with great beauty and sublimity imitated and improved by Addison, in his 'Vision of Mirza,' in the Spectator.

Rochefoucault and Mandeville.

If these satirists intended to correct the morals of mankind, by telling them that their actions, even the best in appearance, originated in selfishness, they took a very unwise method: men must be coaxed into virtue, as children are, by good words. When a child is directed to a right action, we encourage him by saying, 'there is a good little man;' we do not call him a puppy, &c. that would anger him, and make him obstinate.

The Author of Hudibras.

In the early part of his youth, the celebrated Samuel Butler was a clerk under Sir Samuel Luke, an attorney, whom he afterwards made the hero of his politico-theological poem. This circumstance naturally accounts for the author borrowing so many witty allusions from his former law studies. His hero is of course fertile in parchment wit and allegory; but as was said of Congreve, all his characters, men and women, gentle and

simple, are facetious; so fares it with the two great characters in Butler's *Epic*, *Hudibras* and the widow. When the hero and his fair mistress plead for and against love and matrimony, the 'alternate coruscation' of their jokes emanates from terms which the law had provided for these intellectual gladiators; and so ingeniously and comically are they applied, that the gravest *judge* could not but choose, whilst reading them, to exhibit Milton's ludicrous image of "Laughter holding both his sides."

W. Gilpin, A. M.

This elegant writer on "picturesque beauty" has opened the eyes of many careless observers of the scenes of nature, and instructed those who before were delighted with fine prospects, to select their objects, and to found the pleasures of sight on the foundations of good sense and taste. We may say of the reader of *Gilpin*, that he will soon catch the love of nature from this elegant instructor; and in the words of *Catullus*,*

Cras amet qui nunquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet.

No beautiful tree will escape his observation; no vista in a pleasure-ground that will not attract his notice, and become an object of praise or censure;

* *Pervigilium Amoris.*

so clearly has this author described the varieties of his multifarious scenery. A classical reader will be delighted with the happy applications of many passages out of Virgil, in which he proves that elegant poet to be a connoisseur in picturesque beauty as well as himself. The pencil of Gilpin enabled him to place much of his instruction before the *eyes* of his reader, so that he wanders in his forests, and walks by the sides of his lakes and rivers. In the former views, his portraits of animals strike us with particular delight. In his introduction of the reader into his delightful prospects, he is reminded of the hero and his guide in the favourite author of Gilpin, when they approach the Elysian Fields—

“ Devenère locos lætos, et amoena vireta
 “ Fortunatorum nemorum, sedesque beatas.
 “ Largior hic campos æther et lumine vestit
 “ Purpureo; solemque suum, sua sidera nêrunt.”

Æneid, lib. 6.

Guarini the Poet.

Though the author of “*Pastor Fido*” is not remarkable for nature and simplicity in his poetry, yet the following lines on “*Modesty*” are an exception to the above censure :

Vergogna che n'altrui stampi natura,
 Non si puo renegare, che si tu senti,
 Di cacciar la dal cor fugge nel volto.

“This sentiment of shame will prevail, however we may endeavour to dismiss it: if we banish it from the heart, it will take refuge in the countenance.” This circumstance, though not physically true, yet can well serve the purposes of poetry to strike the fancy.

Discoveries in the Arts and Sciences.

The Abbé du Bos has learnedly observed, that these discoveries are not made by dint of study and previous theories, but arise in consequence of hints produced by accidents, and pursued by men of mechanical skill, but of no philosophical genius. Telescopes, the compass, making of glass, &c. among many other inventions, may be brought to confirm the Abbé's observation; who shrewdly remarks also, that learned nations and erudite individuals are not of course distinguished by their good sense, judgment, and sagacity.

Jealousy.

This dreadful passion does not arise only from the suspicion of a *carnal* crime in the parties, but nearly as often from the observation that the parties seem more *intellectually* amused with each other. Those who are harassed with the more

vulgar suspicion, should attend to the sentiment of
 "Nature's secretary"—

For boy, howsoever we do pride ourselves,
 Our *fancies* are more giddy and unfirm;
 More longing, wavering, sooner lost and won
 Than women's are.

Twelfth Night.

Sir Isaac Newton.

In a late publication of anecdotes of eminent persons, the following story is related of Sir Isaac Newton. When he was at the head of the Mint, he employed a person to settle his accounts. The writer seems to imply, that this great philosopher was not equal to the summing part of that office. Surely this is making, rather than relating, a wonderful thing. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that an eminent mathematician was induced to employ an agent in the Mint, to leave to himself more liberty for his sublimer speculations?

Taste for the Nude.

The exposure of their fair persons by the ladies is not only at variance with modesty, but seems equally in hostility with taste. We will consult a man of prose and a man of poetry on this delicate point of taste. "When a garden," says Mr. Southcote, "is discoverable at one glance of the eye, it takes

"away even the hope of variety." When the beautiful Armida appears before the enemy's camp, the Italian poet describes the delicate and enchanting reserve of her dress,

"Parte appar delle mamme," &c.

Part of her heaving bosom rose to view,
The greater part her envious veil conceals.
In vain the veil is there ; for Fancy, true
To passion, all the hidden charms reveals.

Tasso Gierusal. cant. 4, stanza 31.

If this be true of young and beautiful females, what shall we say of the indiscretion of those ladies, from whom age has taken away, or to whom nature or ginally denied, any charms to expose ?

Songs and Novels.

From idle ballads, and as idle novels, do young persons imbibe their first ideas of a passion, which may destroy in a few hours their whole views of comfort and happiness. Let them attend to the words of a wise man. "The passion called Love has so general and powerful influence ; it makes so much of the entertainment, and indeed so much of the occupation of that part of life, which decides the character for ever ; that the mode and the principles on which it engages the sympathy, and strikes the imagination, become of the utmost importance to the manners and the morals of society."—*Burke.*

History.

The same eminent politician has well described the twofold nature of history, and the good or evil that may result from the reading of it. "In history, a great volume is unrolled for our instruction, drawing the materials of future wisdom from the past errors and infirmities of mankind. It may, in the perversion, serve for a magazine, furnishing offensive and defensive weapons for parties in Church and State, and supplying the means of keeping alive or reviving dissensions and animosities, and adding fuel to civil fury." History consists, for the greater part, of the miseries brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal, and all the train of disorderly appetites which disturb the public, with the same

"Troublous storms that toss

"The private state, and render life unsweet."

Habits of Men in Office

are well described and discriminated by the same excellent philosopher and eloquent writer. "The habits of office are apt to give men a turn to think the substance of business not to be of much more importance than the forms by which it is conducted. These forms are well adapted to con-

duct ordinary business ; and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well, as long as things go on in their common order. When the high roads are broken up, and the waters out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the *file* affords no precedent, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, and a far more extensive comprehension of things, is requisite than ever office gave, or than office can give." To these observations let us add, that personal courage is seldom found amidst the habits of service ; and in public danger, that quality most wanted is not there to be sought, wherein, as the poet describes such a state,

" Rich men look sad, and ruffians dance and leap."

Richard II. scene 6.

The Retort Valiant, or Hints to Jokers.

An indifferent author, but of high self-value, described a person in company as

" A reader

"Of all such readings as were never read."

The gentleman heard the accusation very plainly; and turning to his next neighbour, and looking at his accuser, calmly replied, " that gentleman is very much mistaken, I never read any of his publications."

Then leave to low buffoons, by custom bred,
 And form'd by nature to be kick'd and fed,
 The vulgar and unenvied task to hit
 All persons, right or wrong, with random wit.

Essay on Conversation, Dodsley's collect. vol. i.

Travellers.

A true Englishman is often disgusted with the imported manners and the speeches of many of his countrymen, who have visited France and Italy. In the former, they ape the foreigner, and by their tongues disgrace themselves, by their preference of other nations to their own. My Lord Bacon very wisely guards young persons against this vice and folly. "Let his travel rather appear in his discourse, than in his apparel and gesture; let him rather be advised in his answers, than forward to tell stories; and let it appear that he doth not change his manners for those of foreign parts, but only in some flowers of that he hath learned abroad into the customs of his own country." We find great truth in the following picture of a traveller, by a satiric poet in Queen Elizabeth's time.

This is that *Colax*, that from foreign lands
 Hath brought that new infection that undoes
 His country's goodness, and impoisons all.
 His being abroad would mar us all at home;
 'Tis strange to see, that by his going out
 He hath outgone that native honesty,
 Which here the breeding of his country gave.

Daniel's Arcadia.

Silent Men.

The reserve of silence is frequently the offspring of dulness and pride, and often the *trait* of conscious inability to command attention equal to its wishes. The former character did not escape the notice of "nature's prime secretary."

"There are a sort of men, whose visages
 "Do cream and mantle like a standing pool,
 "And do a wilful stillness entertain,
 "With purpose to be dressed in an opinion.
 "Of wisdom," &c.

This reserve of the vain and foolish will remind the reader of a story of a poor but proud man, who always kept a strong lock on one of his largest chests, which at his decease was discovered to be empty.

Modern Composition and Oratory.

The ultra-metaphorical style in writing and speaking, which is at present in vogue, cannot be described better, or more forcibly ridiculed, than by the following passage in *Hudibras* :

His ordinary rate of speech
 In lottiness of sound was rich,
 A Babylonish dialect,
 Which learned pedants much affect.
 It was a party-colour'd dress
 Of patch'd and pye-ball'd languages ;
 'Twas English cut on Greek and Latin,
 Like fustian heretofore on satin.

Cant. 1.

The ridicule of this description is rendered more poignant when it applies to an ignorant man, as was the hero of Butler.

Milton.

“ One of the greatest faults in this poet,” says Bishop Newton, in a note on this passage, “ is an excessive ostentation of learning.” The following passage proves that it was not always correct :

Anon, out of the earth a fabric huge
Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
Built like a temple, whose pilasters round
Were set, and Doric pillars, overlaid
With golden architrave.

Here this illustrious poet wrote without book, or he would have known that a pilaster is a flat square, projecting out of the walls ; and over Doric pillars the *plainest* architrave was raised, as that was the simplest order of all the three.—See *Essai sur l'Architecture*, by Le P. L'Augier. A Paris, 1755.

Friendship.

That which subsisted between Henry IV. of France and his Prime Minister Sully, conferred the greatest honour on both personages. The following Epitaph on the Duke de Sully is written with a classical brevity and elegance, which are not often seen in the poetry of the French :

Souverains, adorez la cendre
 De l'Homme en ces lieux endormi ;
 Le premier il fut vous apprendre
 Qu' un Roi peut avoir un Ami.

IMITATED.

Ye Sovereigns all o'er Sally's grave
 With gratitude and reverence bend;
 He first the bright example gave
 That e'en a King may have a Friend.

Elegant Epitaph.

The following elegant Epitaph on a Westminster Scholar will delight any classical readers who have either not seen it before, or have forgotten it. Time is supposed to speak it, and who is represented by a small statue with a tablet in his hand, and is worthy of the classical taste of the lines which he recites.

*Quid breves te delicias tuorum
 Nantiis Phæbi chorus omnis urget,
 Et meæ falcis subito recisum
 Vulnere plangit !*

*En puer, vitæ pretium caducæ,
 Hic tuas custos vigil ad favillas
 Semper adstubo, et memori tuebor
 Carmine famam.*

*Audies, clarus pietate, morum
 Integer, multæ studiosus artis,
 Hæc frequens olim leget, hæc sequetur
 Æmula Pubes.*

Strictures on the οἰκοφοβία, or Fear of Home.

Though this disease be very common in these times wherein "watering places," as they are called, continue so much in vogue, and as it is not noticed by the Faculty, I call the attention of the reader to this subject for a few minutes. The fear of staying at home is certainly an endemic disease; and at times, high and low, rich and poor, gentle and simple, are suffering under this influenza, till the cure, a dangerous though common one, called "*deficiens crumena*," puts an end to the fever. When I see Bath and Cheltenham filled with aged spinsters, widows, and old bachelors, who seem afflicted by no malady, save those which are produced by a life of solitude and celibacy, I readily excuse such idle wanderers, and indeed compassionate

"These solitary flies,

"No hive have they of hoarded sweets:—"

But when I see a large domestic circle of young persons of both sexes, I lament that the οἰκοφοβία should have infected so interesting a group. Yet some allowance must be made for these: their dwellings in the country may be thin in neighbours, or abounding with married persons only, and Bath and Cheltenham may then supply the dearth of lovers in their neighbourhood. Such a

temporary emigration from home is then useful, and perhaps necessary. Home is home though never so homely, is an old and true saying; and the Philosophic Latin Poet has spoken on this subject with his usual knowledge of the human mind and disposition.

Quod petis, hic est,
Est Ulubris, animus si te non deficit æquus.

This equal balance of the mind is the lot of few, for according to the opinion of the greatest philosophers among the Greeks, the love of vanity is founded on the debility of our nature. This Saint Vitus's dance after pleasure, this *stare loco nescit*, rages most where the mind has too much or too little bias, when no employment can fit it, or when the burden of it is too great for its strength. Of this disease, and such I consider it, I have in vain looked into the *Materia Medica* for a cure; but I think I have found one in the *Materia Philosophica* of an eminent Mind-doctor in antiquity. As he is a great poet as well as sage, perhaps his recipe may not be disagreeable to the taste of the reader. The lines are well known to the classical reader, and the English scholar will not disdain to peruse the elegant version of Creech. The poet having stated that if men knew what was the matter with them when under the pressure of self-weariness, they would not run from one place

to another in vain, but find *employment* the best cure for their disease, thus proceeds—

Did they know this, as they all think they know,
 They would not lead such lives as now they do.
 One 'tired at Home' forsakes his stately seat,
 And seeks some melancholy, close retreat,
 And soon returns; for prest beneath his load
 Of cares, he finds no happiness abroad.
 Others, with full as eager haste, retire,
 As if their father's house were all on fire,
 To their small farm; but yet scarce enter'd there,
 They grow uneasy with their usual care;
 Or seeking to forget their grief, lie down
 To thoughtless rest, or else return to Town.
 They all do strive to shun themselves; in vain,
 For troublesome he sticks close, the cares remain, }
 For they ne'er know the cause of all their pain :
 Which, if they did, how soon would all give o'er
 Their fruitless toys, and study nature more.
 That is a noble search, and worth our care,
 On that depends eternal hope or fear;
 That teaches how to look beyond our fate,
 And fully shews us all our future state.

Lucret. b. 3, end.

Nothing is new under the sun. How well does this ancient writer describe the loungers at our public places, and their ignorance of themselves! Do we not see Noblemen and Noblewomen, leaving their stately mansions in the country, to hide themselves in close-pent lodgings at Brighton and Margate, and then running back to London again in the same hurry and unsteadiness, for the want of **EMPLOYMENT**?

Lovers

Are in general a vile set of mendicants, and, like most beggars, very humble till they gain the objects of their petition: they then discredit your favours, by the licentious abuse of them. If lovers in a manly manner would solicit a lady's hand, there would be no occasion for all the whining and mumping of these amorous mendicants, and openness and honour on both sides would form the basis of this confidential treaty.

Tutors.

When an ingenious and learned tutor sits among a dull and heavy class of pupils, exerting himself to instruct them by all his powers of explanation, he reminds me of an active rider seated on a dull jade of an horse; his limbs and whole body are in the utmost state of activity, yet it is manifest to the spectators that he gets on very slowly, and is riding much faster than his horse.

In some cases the reverse may take place, the tutor may be a very dull man, or a very ignorant though a conceited one, and yet the blame attaches to the pupil, however attentive or bright in intellect he may prove. Such a pupil is very unfortunately employed in his attendance on such a deficient instructor; he is attempting to draw

water out of a well that has a bad spring, and after trying to get Truth out of it, he begins to find that she never was put in there.

Miseries.

Some persons who have received real or imaginary injuries, are very fond of detailing them before company, from whom they neither expect nor can receive any assistance, relief, or even pity. Such men should resort to a consultation of lawyers: they remind one of some invalids who detail their infirmities in mixed companies, as if they were composed totally of medical men. Surely, in both cases, injuries and maladies are subjects of business, not conversation. Writers of travels and voyages are very apt to *amuse* their readers by the miseries they meet with in their journeys.

Sentimentality.

It would be as pernicious in private life for an individual to act under the direction of his feelings and sentiments, instead of establishing moral principles; as it would be, in public life, for a legislator or lawyer to leave the rules of law, and determine by his own private opinions of equity. *Jus dicere et non dare* controuls the greatest powers of judicature in this country. My Lord Coke in his

Institutes cautions Parliaments "to leave all causes to be measured by the golden and straight rule of the law, and not by the uncertain and crooked cord of discretion."

Idleness.

Absolute idleness is no more admissible in the *moral* world, than an absolute vacuum can be considered as philosophically true in the physical world. *Tom* who spends all his mornings in study, and his brother in whistling about the house, are both employed; and it would be as irksome to the young brother to be held from his employment, as it would be to *Tom* to have his book shut up. With respect to society, no doubt idleness is properly condemned, as it is an employment producing no good to the public, or in the language of Adam Smith, 'tis unproductive labour.

Cowardice

Is generally attended with a propensity to inflict pain on persons and animals, which it thinks can be done with safety; and I have little doubt but that the man who should shew extreme caution and humanity in not treading on a worm, would be the first man to attack the formidable serpent, from whom the worm-slayer would fly precipitately.

Atheist.

"The fool has said in his *heart* there is no God." Solomon, the wise king of Israel, well knew that from the *heart* comes all evil; and that the heart must be first corrupted, ere such a foolish thought could have arisen. No man has said from his *head* so strange a thing, unless that head was weak in the extreme, and so incapable of understanding the evidence around of a God; or the head must be deranged by disease, so as not to be efficient to the purposes of reasoning.

French Drama.

Some Critics have objected to the too frequent introduction of love in the French dramas; yet, what passion can be so well calculated to please the frequenters of a theatre, because love is an universal passion, and of course universally interesting. It has been, indeed, with more justice objected to *Addison*, that in his "Cato" he has introduced love as an episode: this surely is wrong, for that passion is of itself sufficient to fill the whole plan of a play, and must act the principal part always.

The Medea of Seneca.

Though this Tragedian is generally too inflated and unnatural to interest, yet the following speech

of Medea, descriptive of her bold and self-confident character, is very striking and dramatic. Her confidante says,

Your country hates you, and the man you lov'd
Deserts you, then on whom can you rely?
Med. Whom? on myself—

Compassion.

It is a remark of Aristotle, that persons in the extremes of happiness or misery exhibit little sense of pity towards others. "Very fortunate persons," says that eminent philosopher, "are too selfish to consider about others; and the very wretched suppose that no calamities can be greater than their own."

England.

At this distant period we cannot read without a smile the following passage in the life of Agricola, by Tacitus. A native, on the invasion of Agricola, exclaims, "The extreme remoteness from any other nation of this, and its great obscurity and peculiar situation, have hitherto aided us to preserve our liberty. Around us nothing is to be seen but vessels and rocks."—And Horace not long before had said, "*toto divisos orbe Britannos.*"

Men of Genius.

When such persons put forth all the splendour of their talents in company, and are determined

to shine with all their might, they incommode us like the sun at mid-day in July ; and we wish for the calm shade which companions less painfully brilliant might afford to our exhausted powers of attention and admiration. The latter long continued becomes irksome, the flashes of wit and the thunder of eloquence *soon* weary us.

Rhetoric.

It is astonishing how much we are influenced by this art. The errors of Buffon, the sophisms of Gibbon and Rousseau, the impudence of Voltaire, are concealed from our view by the overbearing rays of their splendid eloquence. We are carried away by the rapid stream of Rousseau's oratory, or entangled by its whirlpools, or look with delight on the calm yet brilliant current, and forget the shoals that surround us, and shut our eyes against the rocks that threaten our existence. Yet Rousseau himself inveighed against rhetoric—he was well acquainted with the dangerous sharpness of that weapon.

Beautiful Imagery.

Dryden, whether employed in verse or prose, was always a poet. Describing the early exertions of Virgil's muse to prepare herself for more daring flights, he says, " He could not forbear (Virgil)

to try his wings, though his pinions were not hardened to maintain a long and laborious flight; yet sometimes they bore him to a pitch as lofty as ever he was able to reach afterwards. But when he was admonished by his subject to descend, he came down, gently circling in the air, and singing to the ground; like a lark, melodious in her mounting, and continuing her song till she alights, still preparing for a higher flight at her next sally, and tuning her voice to better music."—*Dryden's Dedication to the Pastorals of Virgil.*

Bon Mot of Christina, Queen of Sweden.

A professor of geology made a long and learned harangue upon the age of the world, and upon the probable time of its duration. After the lecture, some of the audience applied to the Queen for her opinion about the world's age, &c. "My opinion is," said Christina, "that the World, like other old ladies, is very shy of discovering her number of years."

N.B. This bon mot has been attributed since to M. Voltaire.

Disputes about Taste.

It seems proverbially established in the arts, that whatever pleases must be considered as having

a legitimate power to please, without any appeal to critical discussions. Yet how to lay out a garden has been of late much subjected to controversy; some contend for smooth walks and lawns, others for wild and abrupt paths and hillocks, and some quote pictures as our infallible guides to arrange our home-stall scenery. Surely such varieties, not to say absurdities, of opinion prove the truth of the adage, that we must not dispute about tastes, for *taste* must mean what pleases the palate of a variety of persons. "*Pascunt vario diversa palato*"—which, to translate Horace, in plain English must be, that we have all palates, but different degrees of taste annexed to them.

Evils of Hard Study.

There are three evils against which a man addicted to literary pursuits should guard himself, viz. pedantry, the bane of good manners; misanthropy, equally hostile to the understanding and taste; and, in the third place, weariness and exhaustion of the intellectual powers, which cause epilepsies, and other bad disorders. Proper relaxations will obviate these maladies. Walking in pleasant gardens, manual arts, music, and painting, and even perfuems, have been found remedies to over-laboured intellects: exercise is above all

remedies. The ancients had their groves and their porticoes, in which they took the air whilst they conversed with their pupils. The classical allegory that the Muses loved to live on a high hill is sufficiently intelligible ; and that the free air of the country is favourable to the cultivation of literature, is well known to every one who, long confined in a city, has breathed for a time the purer air of meadows and plains. To know when our low spirits arise from physical or moral causes, is one of the greatest secrets in the art of managing our health and happiness.'

Logic.

It may be an useful caution to some readers to observe, that when any accusation is brought against *logic*, it means not to arraign the general use of this art, but some treatise or treatises which tend rather to weaken than invigorate the reasoning powers of man. For he who has cultivated with success his faculty of ratiocination, must be a better chemist, politician, &c. than one who has neglected to do so, and exposed his mind to the unsteady lights of conjecture and undisciplined reason.

Excessive Praise and Censure.

Plutarch has written a treatise on purpose to teach the distinction between a friend and a flat-

terer. No author of antiquity has suffered more than Aristotle from foolish admirers and excessive flatterers, so that those who have endeavoured to suppress these exaggerated panegyrics have fallen into the opposite extreme of unjust censure and unjustifiable disapprobation. Every real scholar will acknowledge the truth of an observation in one of Congreve's plays, though ludicrously stated, "that Aristotle was not so great a fool as some people have taken him for."

Practice.

How many persons are contented to acknowledge that they have bad memories, "I can remember nothing I read," &c. ; yet the same persons are very unwilling to be thought deficient in knowledge and acquirements. But surely this is to boast of possessing edifices, which they say have no foundation. If we really are in earnest in our complaints of memory, let us cultivate it diligently and discreetly, and we shall find a daily improvement in it, and cease to talk, but remember Pope's line—

Wits have short memories, and blockheads none.

Pleasures.

That susceptibility of cheap and innocent pleasures, which some persons invariably maintain, is

the best proof of a soundness of mind, and of an healthy stimulus which is impressed on it. When the body is in a vigorous state, the enjoyment of simple food and potations is familiar to it; when it becomes vitiated and infirm, plain dishes no longer give pleasure, but violent stimulants are sought with eagerness. The same morbid process takes place in the mind from long indulgence in vicious pursuits, cheap and innocent pleasures become insipid, and destructive excesses sink the mind in shapeless dissipation. How divinely sings the poet of the true scale of philosophy—

Brave conquerors ! for so you are,
That war against your own affections,
And the huge army of the world's desires.

Love's Labour Lost.

Good Sense and Good Conduct.

It were to be expected from arguments *a priori*, that a sensible man would be a man of rational conduct, and that, according to the fanciful notions of the ancient philosophers, the wise and good man would be one and the same person. This would happen, were it not for the passions, which education and intellect *seem* able indeed to controul, but seldom are seen to do so. Satire draws man with a more faithful hand than philosophy, and Pepe has said truly,

Our depths who fathoms or our shallows, finds;
 Quick whirls and shifting eddies of our minds;
 On human actions reason tho' you can,
 It may be reason, but it is not man.

Gulliver's Travels.

By an acute observation of an elegant scholar and most amiable man, the misanthropic spirit of this satire is "laid in the Red Sea," and the wit of it totally rendered of none effect. Speaking of this work, Mr. Harris says, "the absurdity in this author (a wretched philosopher, though a great wit) is well worth remarking. In order to render the nature of man odious, and the nature of beasts amiable, he is compelled to give human characters to his beasts, and beastly characters to his men; so that we are to admire the beasts, not for being beasts, but amiable men; and to detest the men, not for being men, but detestable beasts." — *Philolog. Enq.*

Connoisseur.

To form a judgment of pictures, it seems reasonable, no doubt, that the connoisseur should be acquainted with the original subjects. Yet how many persons, who have scarcely seen more of nature than the Parks and Kensington Gardens, give their opinions of the beautiful landscapes of the Poussins and Claude, and venture their criti-

cisms on their faults! This fact brings a story to recollection of a gentleman from the Herald's College, who was much disappointed on the view of the lions in the Tower, as he found them so very different from what he had used to delineate them, rampant, couchant, &c. at the College.

Best Practice in Medicine.

The great Sydenham [born 1624] relates of himself, that ever since he had applied to the practice of physic he had been of opinion, and the opinion every day had been confirmed in him, that the medical art could not be learnt so surely as by use and experience; and that he that should pay the nicest and most accurate attention to the symptoms of distempers would infallibly succeed best in searching out the true means of cure. For this reason he adds, "I give myself up entirely to this proceeding, secure and confident that while I followed Nature I could not err."—*Sydenham's letter to Dr. Mapletoft.*

Simplicity of Style.

There seems a deal of cant in praising this excellent quality in writing; and as it happens in all other canting praises, they are more especially brought forward by those persons who possess very little of that virtue themselves. In the "English Garden" by *Mason*, we see a panegyric

on simplicity of style in the initial lines of the poem, out of which many passages might be produced to shew that Mason was no practical admirer of simplicity in general style of poetry, where his "idle epithets" as Quintilian calls them, hang heavy weights on the flimsy texture of his composition.

Mobs philosophically described.

The imperfections of individuals being great, they are moreover enlarged by their aggregation; and being erroneous in their single numbers, being huddled together, they will be error itself; for being a confusion of knaves and fools, and a fartaginous concurrence of all conditions, tempers, sexes, and ages, it is but natural, if their determinations be monstrous, and in many ways inconsistent with truth.—(*Vulgar Errors*, Sir T. Brown, b. 1. c. 3.)

Virtue.

How many men are virtuous, from knowing not how many are the temptations to vice in the world; as many others are very bold, from an ignorance of the danger which may be in the way of their pursuits. Many men are bullies, because they never met a bolder man than themselves. Knowledge of the world makes men very quiet,

as they know how many there are, from various reasons, inclined to be otherwise.

The Stoics.

This sect among the ancients cannot be reckoned among their sages. All attempts, and even boasts, to have driven all the passions from their agency, are at once ridiculous and impossible. What should we think of a navigator, who should wish to check every wind, and to fit up his vessel only with ballast, and leave out the sails?

Attachment to Theories.

Whatever objections they may express to arguments *à priori*, the most obstinate attachment to their favourite theories is visible in many persons who deem themselves no mean philosophers. I knew one man, that every winter was hazarding his neck on the ice, in spite of sundry bad falls and contusions, because, as he said, his *theory* of skating was complete. Another acquaintance would never get into a coach of any kind, because, according to his theory, they ought to be subject to an overturn every step which they moved.

Mrs. Radcliffe's Romances.

Many readers object to her frequent picturesque descriptions of landscape in her narratives; and

the critics say, that they do not assist the main story: all this may be objectionable, yet the descriptions are so beautiful in themselves, that we would not have them expunged. Mrs. R.'s heroines make their journeys like travellers of *virtù*, who carry with them eminent painters, that they may adorn their narratives by that pleasing art of bringing their prospects before the eyes of the reader.

John Locke.

In most minds, the treatises of this profound Philosopher on the human mind are likely to produce a modest and humble opinion of the faculties of our understanding; yet have I known some persons who, from the reading of Locke, have assumed greater confidence in their intellects, and become more disputatious and verbose in conversation, than they were before. Surely such men were ill qualified to peruse the writings of this sober philosopher.

Coquetry.

Tacitus seems as well acquainted with the foibles of his female, as with the vices of his male, characters. Speaking of the Empress Poppæa, when she appeared in public, he says, she came forth *velata oris parte ne satiaret aspectum*. She

concealed part of her face, lest she glut the spectator. The lady, no doubt, knew, as well as the historian, that exposed beauties by custom pall upon the eye. In a facetious paper in the 'World,' on 'naked bosoms,' the writer introduces a beau saying, on viewing this too common and frequent exposure of these charms, "It is very pretty, but I have seen it before."

Merry Stories.

Among the minor miseries of life may be reckoned the telling a lively anecdote to a mere matter-of-fact man. Persons of a mercurial disposition explode into laughter when the train is hardly laid, and the heartiness of their mirth is truly patronizing. But alas, how often is the narrator of a frolic tale reminded, to his cost, of the poet's observation—

A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that tells it.

Same subject continued. A Sly Question.

Mr. B—— was complaining to a friend that his neighbour H—— was a fellow so dull and impracticable in his intellect and conversation, that if you told him a very smart story, he was certain that he would not understand it. "Pray,

my good friend," replied the other, "did you ever try him?"

The Geometrician Defended.

A superficial censure passed on a man of science may be easily repelled by plain sense. A Geometrician having read a long poem, asked somewhat tartly, 'What does all this prove?' Now doubtless a poem that does not inculcate some moral, political, or religious truth, must be reckoned among the *nugæ canoræ*, or tuneful trifles, of a mind laboriously idle. A good poem should endeavour at least to instruct, by amusing. Every reader will assent to the praises of the Muse of Twickenham, displayed in the following lines—

"Best of philosophers, of poets too
The best; he teaches thee thyself to know,
That virtue is the noblest gift of heaven,
And vindicates the ways of God to man.
O hearken to the moralist divine,
Enter his school of truth, where Plato's self
Might preach, and Tally deign to lend an ear."

Character of Mr. Pope's writings, taken from a Poem called Sicknes.—Dodsley's Poems, vol. iii. p. 337.

False Ornaments in Gardening.

It may now be hoped that in the plans of laying out grounds in imitation of nature frivolous ornaments will be removed. *Jets d'eau*, who exhibit themselves only to company, will be no more

seen. A man of exquisite taste in poetry, and all the liberal arts, has nobly spoken on this subject—

“ Rich in her weeping country’s spoils, Versailles
May boast a thousand fountains, that can cast
The tortured waters to the distant heavens.
Yet let me chuse some pine-topp’d precipice,
Abrupt and shaggy, whence a foamy stream,
Like Anio, rumbling roars, &c.”

Enthusiast, or the Lover of Nature, by Joseph Warton.

Sentimentalists.

These persons resemble, in their moral pretensions, those who are called *Methodists*, in their religious ones. General principles of right and wrong they both disdain, and place their motives on the suggestion of a spirit and feeling known only to themselves. When the sentimentalist holds out his private feelings, as the groundwork of his moral actions, and the religionist talks of an inward call, and a directing spirit, it is high time to inspect their conduct with a suspicious eye. Occult qualities are no longer creditable in science; and secret pretensions to extra virtue and latent piety should have as little credit with the wise.

END OF VOL. I.

Noctes Atticæ,
OR
REVERIES IN A GARRET;

CONTAINING
SHORT, AND CHIEFLY ORIGINAL,
OBSERVATIONS
ON
MEN AND BOOKS.

BY PAUL PONDER, GENT.

"Nubes et inania captat."

Hor. A. P.

"I agree with Mr. Gray, 'that any man living may make a book worth reading, if he will but set down, with truth, what he has seen or heard; no matter whether the book is well written or not.'"—*Lord Orford's Letters to the Rev. Mr. Cole, vol. iv. p. 161.*

VOL. II.

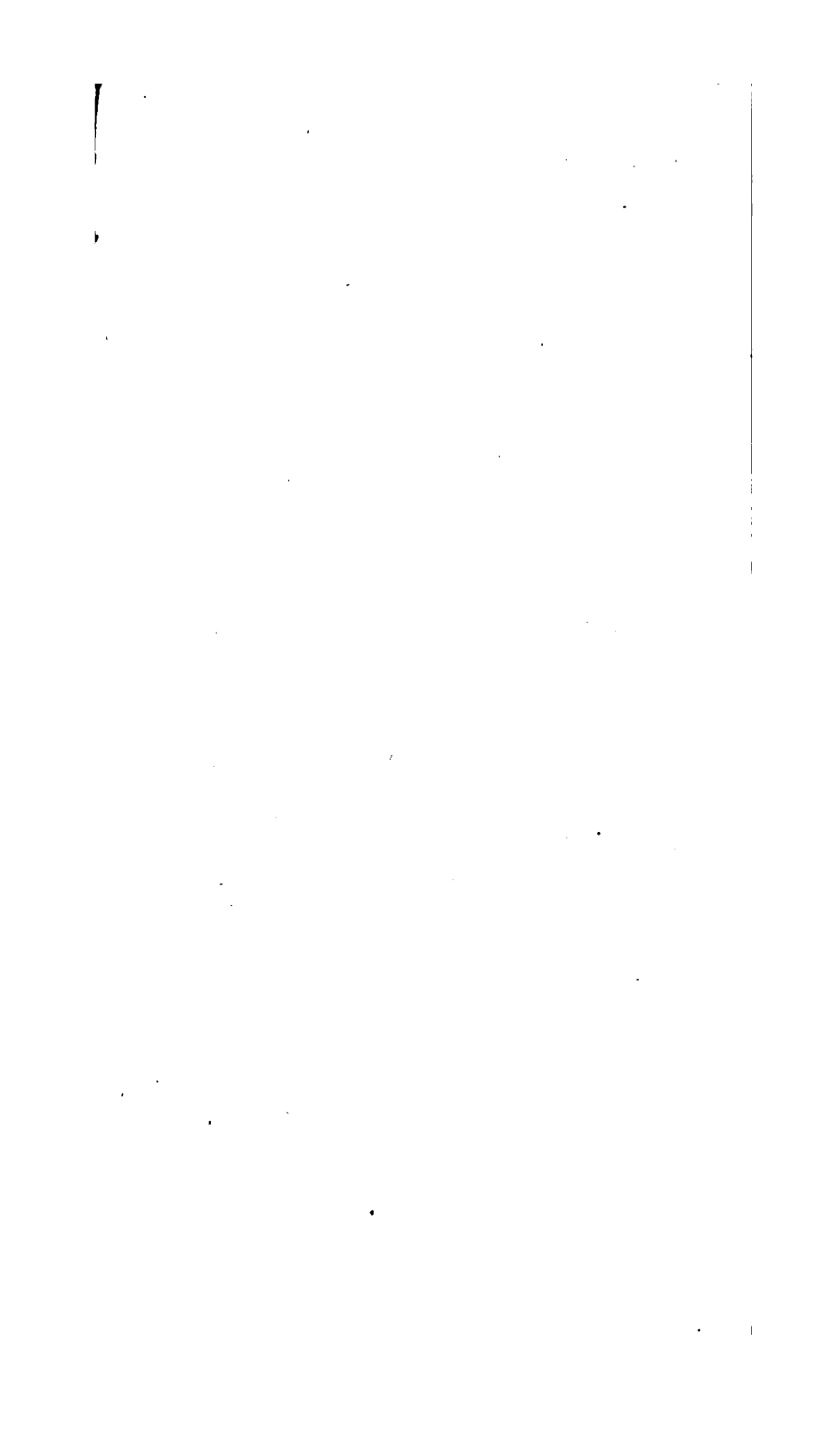
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NOCTES ATTICÆ.

Ultra Sentimentalist.

A very tender-hearted lady, before whom the proposal was made of sweeping a chimney with a large-sized goose let down from the top of it, exclaimed against the cruelty of the scheme with a violence bordering on an hysteric rage; but recovering herself, said, in a sweet tone of voice, that "she thought *two* ducks might be more properly employed."

Conversation.

How few persons possess the gift of using this faculty with pleasure to others, or of using it at all. Mr. *** is a perpetual talker or soliloquist. Dr. *** absolutely extends his talk into ample dissertations. Some deal in stories, and pile them up one upon another, and remind me of the builders of Babel. To *converse* is to fall in with the former speaker's sentiments, or rationally and modestly to produce opposite sentiments; and thus a various

and pleasing discussion is the result. *Talk* may be the product of memory ; conversation requires talents. Dr. S. Johnson very justly appreciated a man's faculties by his powers of conversing.

David Hume.

The predominance of *cant* over candour and reason is strongly exemplified in the praises bestowed on David Hume. He is said by some to have been a benevolent and *good* man. Yet this writer endeavoured to overturn the hopes of a life hereafter, and to reconcile mankind to the practice of suicide. Surely many a man has been sent to Botany Bay, or suffered at the drop in Newgate, for a less outrageous abuse of his talents than this eminent historian and philosopher. The difference between the evils produced by a robber, nay a murderer, and such a mischievous writer, is incalculable, from its duration and publicity.

Lopez de Vega.

Though this voluminous Spanish writer of plays and poems is often obscure and *puerile* in his conceits, yet he has an ingenious thought in one of his poems, on the similitude between a brother and sister of remarkable beauty. "Nature," he says, "though generally rich in invention, and productive

of endless variety in her portraits, is yet sometimes contented to be only a copyist."

The "divine" Dante,

As he is ridiculously styled by his countrymen, shews so much virulence and love of satire in his poems, that he may rather be said to hate his species than to disapprove their vices. His correction savours more of the voluntary executioner, than of the pitying and offended angel who drove our parents from the confines of Paradise. From such a display of a diabolic disposition in the poet himself, neither the genius of a Dante or a Byron can justify him.

Sonnets.

I have thought that the writers of sonnets much debase themselves by making their own cares and sorrows the subjects of their poems. If they complain of their poverty and want, what is this but mumping and mendicity? If they complain of the frowns and cruelty of their mistresses, at the same time do they not proclaim their own impudence, and the wisdom of their favourites, who refuse the presumptuous aspiration of these *poor* swains to beauty and opulence? In prose these complaints would not be listened to for a moment; and these bardlings avail themselves of a poetical *licence* for mumping and begging.

Travelling.

J. Rousseau, speaking of travelling, says, " In England the middle ranks of life stay at home, and the rich and the noble travel into various countries: on the contrary, in France the nobles and opulent reside in their own country." The reason he gives for this difference carries with it full conviction of the truth of these observations, viz, " The French travel in order to enrich themselves, and the English to get rid of their money."

Education.

Though much brilliant theory exists on this very important subject, yet how little is founded in useful practice. I will instance this defect by the two elementary parts of education—reading and writing. How few persons however accomplished in other particulars, read intelligibly or write legibly. In neither of our Universities is the useful art of elocution taught; and at the bar, and the pulpit, how few tolerable speakers are to be found: ranters, gallopers, mumblers, seem to divide the species of public speakers; and some ecclesiastical orators, by appearing to separate word from word, and giving each an equal force of accent, seem to read always in *italics*.

Strong Impulses

Are necessary to some minds to bring forth their energies, and to counteract the predominancy of the "*vis inertiae*" in their constitutions. The fear of a jail has confined many an author to his study that nothing else could; and many a writer, from the pressure of calamity, (like the toad under the harrow,) has made those exertions that a more desirable situation would never have suggested. It is said that the *Eider*, an Iceland bird, produces most eggs in stormy weather.

Elegant Allusions.

In that admirably witty poem, called the "Spleen," written by Matthew Green, of the Custom House, many very happy allusions are to be discovered. Speaking of exercise as a destroyer of "ennui," he says, in allusion to David and Goliath,

Throw but a stone, the giant dies.

And when he mentions his attachment to a newspaper, how elegantly he praises his favourite reading—

And news, the manna of the day.

M. Prior, in one of his light poems, describes the laudable ambition of posthumous fame very elegantly—

And in life's visit leave your name,

Youth and Age.

In our younger days, it is our most prudent way not to be too fond of the world ; and, in our latter years, not to dislike it too much, and to fly from it. He who is carried away by the eddies which the hurrying pleasures of the world produce around him, may sink in the whirlpool, and yet by good luck escape often ; but the hermit, who in disgust with the world, and a slave to misanthropy, throws himself into solitude, dies by inches amidst his own self-tormenting thoughts, from which he can by no lucky chance escape, or turn the strong stream of melancholy from overwhelming him in its fathomless abyss.

Quizzing.

This modern and fashionable sport of words and jests, though upon the attackable foibles of one another, is a dangerous game. It begins in joke, and ends too often in earnest, especially where there are too great inequalities of rank or talent among the *sparrrers*. I would especially advise young ladies never to touch this harlequin's wand: their tender frames are as little capable of bearing a bruise, as they are of suffering the infliction of a wound. Females would be in a very awkward predicament, should they have taken liberties

with a rude, a vain, and sour-tempered man, and committed themselves to this horse-play raillery, as Dryden calls it.

Melody of Versification.

Milton, who had a great taste for musical sounds, knew that a variety in the pauses of a line was as necessary as a correct measure of the verse, to please the ear of the reader. Blank verse would be extremely heavy and unmelodious, did the same pauses, as in Pope's versification, pervade every line; but Pope was known to have had no ear for music. Dryden has shewn, by the variety of his pauses, that he knew that tones, however agreeable, weary by their sameness; and that monotony is the death of all melody. A modern poet has given us very agreeable specimens of variety of pauses, being himself not only an amateur in music, but possessed of considerable skill in this delightful art. The following lines, that immediately occur, will exemplify the goodness of his ear.

ON LOCKSWELL SPRING.

Pure Fount, that welling from this airy hill,
Dost wander forth into this nether vale,
Thou to the passenger dost tell no tale
Of other years, but thus continuing still
Thy secret way, alone unnotic'd rill,
And almost silent as the clouds that sail

Above thee, calm and reckless of the noise;
 The changing world may keep, dost onward glide—
 But couldst thou speak to the grey clouds that side
 High on thy lowly track, or hadst a voice
 Like him, the Preacher in the Wilderness;
 Yet thou shouldst say to all, that mortal pride
 Fleets like the passing rack, but not the less,
 Wisdom and virtue shall like thee abide, &c.

W. L. Bowler.

Birds in Cages.

It is proverbially said of young persons who have favourite animals under their care, that they kill them with kindness. When grown up persons take this turn of being patrons of animals, they ought to be told that their habits are not those of the creatures they wish to make happy, and from this error, that what they think sport may be death to their adopted favourites. They would then cease to be jailors, and invite them to their gardens and groves, where the creatures may enjoy their liberty, and indulge in those habits which nature has made the foundation of their happiness. To young persons who use themselves to murder whatever animal they can catch, the following lines should be well known—

Poor harmless fly!
 That with his pretty buzzing melody,
 Came here to make us merry; and thou hast kill'd him.

Titus Andronicus, act iii. scene 2.

Vow-Breaking.

Sir William Elwaies, Lientenant of the Tower who was tried for being accessary, and that in a passive way only, to the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, gave a remarkable instance upon the gallows, that people should be very cautious how they make vows to heaven, for the breach of them seldom passes without a judgment, whereof he was a most ruthless example. Being in the Low Countries, and being much given to gaming, he once made a solemn vow (which he brake afterwards,) that if he played above such a sum he might be hanged.—*Hewel's Family Letters to my Father, letter 2, vol ii.*

Laying out Grounds.

Much has been written of late years on this subject, and the principles of the art discussed with much ability, and some sharp dissensions. Pope, who well understood the matter, has, with his usual powers of condensing precepts, furnished us with these excellent observations, which shew the man of taste and science, equally with the poet—

Consult the genius of the place in all,
That tells the waters or to rise or fall,
Or helps the ambitious hill the heavens to scale,

Or scoops in circling theatres the vale,
 Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
 Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades,
 Now breaks or now directs the intended lines,
 Paints as you plant, and as you work designs.

Art of Criticism, line 57.

It is observable here, that the poet has borrowed much of his illustrative imagery from the sister art of painting, the use of which an elegant and very amusing writer has recommended to all landscape gardeners.—*See Uvedale Price on the Picturesque, &c. 3 vols. 8vo.*

Ancient and Modern Superstition.

The following descriptions of a superstitious person, by an ancient writer, seem to bear a close resemblance to the same characters in our own days. The fanciful superstitionist accounts every little distemper in his body, or decay in his estate, the deaths of his children, and public calamities, as the immediate strokes of God, and the incursions of some vindictive Dæmon. He dares not therefore attempt to remove or relieve his disasters, or to use the least remedy, for fear he should seem to struggle with God, or to make resistance under correction. If he be sick, he thrusts away the physician; if he be in any grief, he shuts out the philosopher who would advise and comfort him. 'Let me alone,' saith he, 'to pay for my sins,

I am a curst and vile offender, and detestable both to God and Angels."

The Subject Continued.

"How can any succour, in word or deed, be administered to a superstitious person? He sits down without doors in sackcloth, or wrapt up in foul and nasty rags; yea, many times rolls himself naked in mire, repeating over I know not what sins and transgressions of his own; how he did eat this thing, and drink t'other thing, &c. But, suppose all goes well with him, and he is now at his most temperate devotions, you shall even then find him sitting down in the midst of his house, all be-charmed and be-spelled with a parcel of old women about him, tagging all they can light on, and hanging it upon him, (to use an expression of Bion,) as upon a nail or peg."—*Plutarch, of Superstition.*

A Modern Joke returned to its Owner.

It is reported of the late Lord North, of facetious memory, that on a fit of the gout threatening to approach him, he called for his shoes which he wore on those occasions. "Sir," replied the servant, "some person has stolen them." "I wish," said the facetious minister, "they may soon fit the fellow." The shoes of Demonides, the crip-

ple, were lost, and he supposed he had been robbed of them. "I wish that they may fit the robber," said the philosopher.—*Plutarch, on reading the Poets.*

Music, its Use.

Two great men, Euripides and Plutarch,* differ widely on the propriety of introducing music at a feast. "If at any time," says the philosopher, "'tis over a glass of wine that music should be allowed, then chiefly Apollo and Bacchus harmonize; and Euripides shall not persuade me that music should be applied to melancholy and grief, for there sober reason should, like a physician, take care of the diseased mind." But let us hear the poet—

Queen of every moving measure,
Sweetest source of purest pleasure,
Music, why thy powers employ
Only for the sons of joy,
Only for the smiling guests
At natal or at nuptial feasts?
Rather thy lenient numbers pour
On those whom secret griefs devour,
And with some softly whisper'd air,
Smooth the brow of dumb despair.

*Imitated from the Medea of Euripides,
by Dr. Joseph Warton.*

* See his *Symposiaca*.

Dull Authors.

When men of this common but unfortunate description complain that the world gives their works a very bad reception, they gain, and indeed are entitled to, very little compassion. Such persons remind one of many a silly fellow, who thinks himself a wag, and makes very heavy complaints if you do not laugh at his good things, as he calls them.

Thoughtless Persons.

A false idea of compassion has given rise to this incorrect phrase, when applied to persons whose conduct is blameable by neglecting the common cautions, decencies, and duties of their stations. A man who contracts a debt which he is very slow in discharging, yet continues to lead the same expensive mode of life, is far from being thoughtless, but is ever thinking how he shall defer the evil day of payment, and how he shall contrive to continue the same pleasures at the expense of others. He who lives beyond his income is a most selfish man, and heeds not the ills he brings on others; and yet it is well known, that self-love is very thoughtful about itself.

John Gay.

This ingenious fabulist is not enough known, but by very young persons; whilst his wit and good sense entitle him to the praises of every literary man. His "Hare and many Friends," his "Monkies at Southwark Fair," and the "Court of Death," are fine specimens of the pathetic, the humorous, and the sublime. The word "fables," in the minds of the unthinking many, is a depreciating term, though the most noble lessons of ancient instruction, in morals and religion, assumed the form of fables and tales.

*Whether Active or Contemplative Life
is the Better.*

This idle question was much agitated among the ancients, implying their incompatibility with each other. Yet surely, he who leads a contemplative life, with any other view than to improve his sources of action, is a truly idle man, and as useless to the public as the miser, who hoards up money without any wish of its entering into circulation. The mere student, who spends his time in his library, may be learned, as the other may be a rich man; but they will be both useless to the world at large. A shrewd rustic, who had often

called on M. Huet, Bishop of Avranches, in France, on very pressing business, was always repulsed by the Bishop's servant, by saying, "his master could not see him, for he was busy in his library." 'I wish,' said the countryman, 'that the King would send us a Bishop that had finished his studies.'

Usurers.

Plutarch* says very facetiously of these industrious persons, that they laugh at the doctrine of certain philosophers, who assert that nothing can be made of nothing, and of that which has no existence; for with them, usury is engendered of that, which neither is, nor ever was.

"Use before use, and still more use you'll find."

The same Subject, and Hints to Young Persons.

He proceeds in the above essay to inveigh "against running in debt," in a strain of great moral sublimity. "The goddess Diana, in the city of Ephesus, gives such debtors as fly into her temple freedom and protection against their creditors; but the sanctuary of parsimony and moderation in expenses, into which no usurer can enter, to pluck from thence and carry away any debtor

* Plutarch's Morals.

prisoner, is always open to the wise, and affords them a long and large space of joyful and honourable purpose."—*Ibid.*

Our great poet argues on this subject with all the gravity and force of an ancient stoic—

O reason not the need : our basest beggars
Are in the poorest things superfluous.
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beasts.

King Lear.

Jests and Jest Books.

What Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian,* considered as a valuable part of oratory, many dull men treat as frivolous, as if a good joke could subsist without good sense at the bottom of it. A modern professor has written a book on jesting, called the *Merry Philosopher*, and in his introduction, among the other benefits of his book, he hopes it will be a caution to his brother professors in their lectures, not to vitiate the taste of their audience. Public professors in our universities, says the *Merry Philosopher*, often disgrace themselves by wretched jests, with a view to divert their hearers, and to relieve the severity of the profound truths they are proposing, by interlarded jests. The intention was kind.—*Thoughts on Jestings*,

* See their Lectures on Rhetoric.

by *G. Frederic Meier, Professor of Philosophy at Halle, Member of the Royal Academy at Berlin, &c.* London, 1765, 12mo.

N. B. As this treatise of the Merry Philosopher is very dull, and replete with wretched jests, perhaps the title was considered by the author, or the editor, as a facetious misnomer.

Naturalists.

Some of the ancient secretaries of nature often raise a smile of doubt and surprise in their readers, by assuming more knowledge of the habits and dispositions of animals, than cool experience can justify. Pliny, the historian, hazards a singular comment on an occurrence frequent among bees. *Nocte deprensæ in expeditione excubant supinæ, ut alas a rore protegant.* When night overtakes their excursions, the bees are found lying on their backs in a state of watchfulness, in order to protect their wings from the dew. Had the philosopher or his informant been sufficiently awake, they would have found the poor bees were dead.

The R etort Courteous.

Surprise, say grave philosophers, is very often a source of pleasure. A play of words is often

surprising and amusing. M. Boileau having heard an indifferent preacher praised in too high terms, "Father *** preached most excellently last Sunday," observed the eulogist. 'He did better still,' replied the satirist, 'the Sunday before.' "Why," returned the eulogist, "Father *** did not preach at all on that day." 'That is exactly what I meant,' retorted M. Boileau.

Grammar.

It is the cant, and perhaps the interest, of block-heads, to decry the importance of the rules of grammar; and it is their constant practice to wander from them. They are not aware, perhaps, that those who break "the head of Priscian," raise a strong suspicion that their own is far from being sound. Without those "auxiliaries," conjunctions, prepositions, and adverbs, rightly arranged, the logician would not dare to enter the field of controversy, and the orator could not trust his fancy in building the lofty sentence, unless he was assured of the strength of those particles in language, which are as tacks or strong fastenings to his splendid edifice. All the errors in writing which obstruct its great end, perspicuity, arise from the neglect and ignorance of the philosophy of grammar. Bishop Lowth, and Harris in his *Hermes*, will confirm the praises of these indis-

pensable elements of all composition, the rules of grammar.

Singular Thought of a Grammarian.

The following comparison will no doubt raise a smile in the face of many a reader. The imperative, says the sententious philologist, having no first person, resembles the many among the sons of men. Such persons speak always in the second person, and command you to do what they themselves had no thought or intention of doing. *Exempli gratia, ama tu hanc legem*, love thou this law.

Physiognomy.

Had Lavater considered the features in the human face as indicative of the disposition only, fewer objections had been to his theory. We see a proud man's disposition in the turn of a single feature, he

Is seen to ply

The superb muscle of the eye,*

rendered more prominent by his passions. When the same philosopher extends this doctrine to judge of intellect by the same token, many exceptions arise against his theory. One very remarkable] is to be seen at the seat of Earl

* The Spleen, a Poem, Dodsley's Collection.

Harcourt, in Oxfordshire, viz. a picture of Sir Isaac Newton, in middle age, representing a face of uncommon vacancy and imbecility.

Reason.

As this faculty is the offspring of long experience, we cannot expect it in our early days to shew much light; and indeed it shines brightest at the latter end of life, and reminds one of a fire at an inn, in travelling, which flames highest, and gives most warmth, when the guests are going away. "We learn to live," said an old man, "just as we are going to die."

Love of Change, or Variety.

This affection of the mind is ascribed by Aristotle to the general infirmity of the human mind. The sensible Plutarch has well discoursed on this subject. "The several changes of life do only shift, and not wholly extirpate, the causes of our trouble; and these are, our want of experience, the weakness of our judgment, and a certain impotence of mind, which hinder us from making a right use of what we enjoy. The rich man is subject to this uneasiness of humour, as well as the poor; the bachelor, as well as the man in wedlock. This makes the pleader withdraw from the bar, and

then his retirement is altogether as irksome," &c.
As the great secretary of nature has finely said
on this subject—

Oh heaven! were man
But constant, he were perfect: that one error
Fills him with faults.

Two Gentlemen of Verona, act v, scene 4.

N. B. The second line seems elliptical, it means
the "error of being inconstant."

Cupid.

The French are certainly a very gallant people,
and even the ornaments of their books exhibit in
many cases this devotion to the god of love.
One can hardly take up a French book with prints
in it, that does not contain a portrait of "Dan
Cupid" either in the frontispiece, or some of the
vignettes. This gay nation seems to be incessantly
under the influence of that passion, and reminds
us of the city of Abdera, as mentioned by Lucian
and Sterne, when all the inhabitants wandered
about the town, singing, "Cupid, King of Gods
and Men," from the *Andromeda* of Euripides,
whilst a fever reigned in the city.

Happiness of a Literary Man.

I think that Mr. Pope, with his usual "pregnant
brevity," has described the happiness of a man of
letters in one line—

To read what books, and see what friends, he likes.

Some men and some books are difficult of apprehension, dull, dogmatical, and treat of subjects that are not congenial with your mind ; and some books and some men are too ready to bestow all their tediousness upon your honour. It is surely, then, the summit of happiness to select our companions, both dead and alive, which best suit our understandings and our dispositions.

Characters of Humour.

From that reserve and restraint, which the rules of female education generally impose, it happens that we seldom see in life, or on the stage, the character of a female humorist. The neglect or contempt of decorum and the etiquettes of society, that the self-indulgence of a humorist implies, would disgust in a woman ; and no doubt a *female Falstaff* would attract no admirers, either in real or fictitious representation.

Style of Composition.

The style of modern writers seems too much inclined to bombast and verbosity, and predominates over the matter. *Materiam superat opus*. A good style is aptly compared to a good sound stomach, which you enjoy without having your attention attracted by its sensations ; whilst an unsound one is always drawing you from the

business you are engaged in by its weakness and
fatulence.

M. Boileau.

In the *Boileana* it is recorded, that this elegant
and learned critic used to repeat, with many ex-
pressions of approbation, the following lines of a
love-sick maiden :

La charmante Bergere,
Ecoutant les discours
D'une ménagère,
Alloit filant toujours ;
Et doucement atteinte
D'une si tendre plainte,
Fit tomber, par trois fois,
Le fuseau de ses doigts.

N.B. The praises of this accurate scholar and
critic, no doubt, arose from the simplicity and
natural turn of these lines, so unlike the general
puerilities of French erotic poetry. The thought
is taken from a short fragment of Sappho on the
same subject, and addressed to her mother, com-
plaining of the difficulty of continuing her task
of spinning, from the ardour of the passion which
then consumed her.

Bon-Mot of a Fortune-Hunter.

One of these minions of Cupid, being in a
ball-room at Bath, heard a gentleman giving an
account of the death of a rich and old widow

thus—"Died *yesterday*, in her 89th year," said the narrator. 'What a pity!' exclaimed the fortune-hunter; 'what a fine match she would have made two days ago!'

Jealousy.

This passion is twofold, mental and corporeal. The husband who does not suspect his wife of any criminal act with another man, may yet be jealous of his friend's superior powers of pleasing in manners and conversation, and of the diminution of her attentions to him; and examples are not unfrequent, where children are the objects of jealousy, for the same reason, between the parties.

Pronunciation.

It is wonderful how different the same discourse appears, pronounced by a good and a bad reader. When Æschines, after his retreat to Rhodes, was one day reading aloud to some friends his rival's famous speech, and the hearers were lost in wonder at the eloquence of Demosthenes; "What," said he, "would you have thought, if you had heard him pronounce it." Martial, in an epigram, has well illustrated this subject—

"Those verses that you read, my friend, are mine;
But as you read them, they may pass for thine."

Singular Opinion of Philosophy.

Boswell relates an anecdote of an old school-fellow of Dr. Johnson, who said to him, "You are a philosopher, Dr. Johnson: I have tried too in my life to be a philosopher; but I do not know how cheerfulness was always breaking in." This was an opinion natural enough in a dull man, as Johnson's friend is represented to have been; and the error on this important subject is forcibly corrected by our great, and learned, and philosophical Poet—

How charming is divine philosophy !
 Not harsh and crabbed, as dull fools suppose,
 But musical as is Apollo's lute,
 And a perpetual feast of nectar'd sweet,
 Where no crude surfeit reigns. *Milton's Comus.*

Men of Phlegm.

These "cool observers" of life have great negative advantages over persons of more lively imaginations and more ardent passions. The former have very little need of much reason to direct and govern their actions: they seem to possess great patience, and even fortitude, amidst the evils, and against the temptations, of life, but it is mere appearance; and Swift, with his usual acute and

sarcastic description of characters, has strongly sketched that of a phlegmatic man,—

Indifference in wisdom's guise
All fortitude of mind supplies.

Harington, author of the Oceana.

It has been often observed, that the best writers of history are liable to ascribe events to causes either inadequate to their consequences, or altogether irrelative to their probable issues. The following observations of a writer much conversant with political subjects are worthy of our most serious consideration. Speaking of the convulsions of the state in the time of Charles I., Sir James Harington remarks, "The troubles of the times are not to be attributed *wholly* to willfulness or faction; neither to the misgovernment of the prince, nor to the stubbornness of the people; but to a change in the balance of property; which, since Henry the Seventh's time, has fallen into the scale of the Commons, from that of the King and Lords."—*Harington's Oceana.*

Odes.

This mode of composition, so difficult to be well executed, and which seems the "*pons asininus*" of moderate poets, and the foolish wonder of "gentle readers," has had admirers from Cowley to Mason.

The former poet sinned often against the conviction of his own opinion, "that the execution of an irregular ode, as it is familiarly and justly called, was liable to all the severity of criticism;" as we may see in the following lines of this ingenious bard:

'Tis not to force some lifeless verses meet
 With their five gouty feet.
 All every where like man's must be the soul,
 And reason the inferior powers controul.
 Such were the numbers which could call
 The stones into the Theban wall.
 Such miracles are ceased, and now we see
 No towns, or houses, raised by poetry.

Cowley's Ode on Wit, stanza 4.

Novelty of Thoughts.

The following illustration of this subject seems eminently happy. "I own that there is something in the glitter of a new thought like that of a new coin: it, of course, catches our attention for some moments, and we view it, perhaps, in two or three different lights; but, when that is over, we lay no more value upon it, or believe that it has really any more weight than the coins of former princes. It is just so with our thoughts; they may lose something of their lustre by being given and taken so often upon common occasions, but their real value is the same."—*Clarke's Letter to Bowyer. Selection of Articles from the Gent. Mag. 1814.*

Reading and Thinking.

Many a reader is contented with the recollection of what he gains by means of books, and remains inattentive to the consideration that he cannot really profit by them, unless he has used the powers of his own mind in reflecting and meditating on their contents. To a literary man, in the solitude of a country life, this is a very baneful neglect. In a letter of Shenstone, he observes, "I am miserable to think that I have not thought enough to amuse me. I walk a day together, and have no idea, but what comes in at my eyes."—*Letter 26. Leasowes, November 1742.*

Horace's Greek Style.

This very sensible and amusing author seems, to young students, replete with difficulties in his peculiar phrases and idioms. This embarrassment arises from their not considering that Horace, who remained a long time at Athens, (then the fashionable school of literature,) had contracted much of the then most agreeable peculiarities of the Greek tongue; as a young Englishman who had been resident for years at Paris, would now express himself often in French or Gallic modes of phraseology. With this recollection, Horace soon becomes easy and familiar to a Greek student.

"The Double Mistress," in Martinus Scriblerus.

In some late editions of Pope, this tale is praised for its humour and *originality*. To the latter recommendation it is not entitled, as it is recorded as an anatomical fact by a French author.* The anatomical record is made a vehicle of much humour and wit by Pope and his friend Dr. Arbuthnot, though the former had totally forgotten his own sensible and modest remark,

Immodest words admit of no defence,
For want of decency is want of sense.

It is certainly too gross for republication on any account.

The Laurel.

It is the theory of some French critic,† (if I remember rightly, a female,) that much of the ancient mythology, connected with poetry, owed its origin to certain appearances and discoveries in natural history. Whoever has observed the rays of a strong sun reflected from the leaves of a large laurel with excessive splendour, will be led to suppose that this plant was dedicated by the ancient poets to Apollo (or the sun), from this remarkable

* *L'Art d'orner l'Esprit*, &c., by M. Gayot de Pitaval, à Paris, 1728.

† Madame Necker, *MSS.* p. 304. Paris, edit. 1793.

circumstance. Ovid, when he has turned Daphne into a laurel says,

Remanet Nitor unus in illa
Hanc quoque Phœbus amat. *Fab. ix. lib. 1. l. 551.*

Modern Charioteers.

A. Pope with the prophetic and poetic eye of taste, has designated the future race of Lords and Squires mounted on their own coach-boxes. The goddess 'Dulness', in her speech to her favourite sons, in assigning to them employments suited to their respective talents and accomplishments, says,

From stage to stage the licensed Earl may run,
Paired with his fellow charioteer, the sun.*

Here the four-in-hand gentlemen drivers are clearly described; and their carriages, made in the style of "stages," accurately portrayed.

Dull Men.

It would be the extreme of inhumanity not to make every allowance for the defects of persons of this description, did they demean themselves with any degree of modesty and humility. The opposite of all this is the conduct of these antipodes of genius. They are in general arrogant and assuming, as men of cowardly characters are known to

* Dunciad, b. 4, line 587.

be often bullies and Hector, till they meet with an Achilles. Our great moral poet says, or rather sings, of them,

What the weak head with strongest bias rules
Is pride, the never-failing vice of fools ;
Whatever nature has in worth deny'd,
She gives in large recruits of needful pride.
For as in bodies, thus in souls, we find,
What wants in blood and spirits, swell'd with wind.
Pride, where wit fails, steps in to our defence,
And fills up all the mighty void of sense.

Pope's Essay on Criticism, l. 203.

Voltaire

Has with great humour, in his "Candide," described an every-day critic, a man of fastidious turn, without taste or knowledge. "Poco Curante," condemns and disapproves every thing in art or literature. "Surely," says an auditor of these universal censures, "this Poco Curante must be a great man, he likes nothing." La Bruyère, with equal feeling, good sense, and fine taste, has delivered an excellent lesson on this subject :—
"Quand une lecture vous élève l'esprit et qu'elle vous inspire les sentimens nobles et courageux, ne cherchez pas une autre règle pour juger d'ouvrage ; il est bon, et fait de main de l'ouvrier." How different are these sentiments from the affected taste and pedantic dulness which characterize the little minds of minor critics.

Logic.

Some knowledge of this science is useful; but pursued too far, it leads to doubt of every thing. Definitions are the great difficulties in all reasoning; and too exact a demand of these is apt to make a Bayle and a Hume; because such persons cannot emerge from the darkness which they have raised about their own minds, and will not rest in revelation. Syllogisms prevent this state of 'infirming,' as my Lord Bacon* calls it, in opposition to affirming; for the major proposition is built on some acknowledged truths.

Don Quixote.

Perhaps there never was a book so replete with wit and humour, in which a strict propriety of diction and thought is so generally preserved: a most undeniable argument of the author's superior genius. The incomparable Le Sage, in his novels, as they treat too much of *l'amour physique*, has not so well preserved this freedom from indecorum in his narrative. The grave and philosophic John Locke says of Don Quixote, "Of all the books of fiction, I know none that equals Cervantes' History of Don Quixote, in usefulness, pleasantry, and a constant decorum." Then adds,

* See his Advancement of Learning; article, Syllogism.

"indeed no writings can be pleasant, which have not nature at the bottom, and are not drawn after her copy."

The best Practical Philosophers.

It has been observed that persons of mild and gentle dispositions bear the pressure of misfortunes better than those of more obdurate and inflexible minds. The lightning is well known immediately to destroy iron and copper, when they oppose its passage; but to leave untouched large masses of wax that lie in its way—

"Levius fit patientia
"Quicquid corrigere est nefas."

Says a very great moralist and poet of antiquity.

IMITATED,

Patience can make our burdens light,
And soothe misfortune's utmost rage;
This is philosophy's delight,
And marks the blockhead from the sage.

An Elegant Compliment.

One is delighted in seeing a Philosopher of great sense and gravity exhibiting symptoms of playful humour and innocent gallantry. John Locke, in answer to a lady who had invited him to her house, with much praises bestowed on his merit, replied, as the French say, *en galant homme*—

"I know the Emperors of the East suffer not strangers to appear before them, till they are dressed up in their own wardrobes. Is it so too in the empire of wit? Then you must cover me with your own embroidery, that I may be a fit object for your thoughts and conversation. This, Madam, may suit your greatness, but doth not at all satisfy my ambition. He who has once flattered himself with the hopes of your friendship, knows not the true value of things, if he can content himself with these splendid ornaments."--
Letters to Lady Calverley, in Yorkshire, by John Locke.

Pride and Vanity.

Whilst Pride stalks in solitude, the giant of giant castle, Vanity endeavours to gain popularity amidst crowds of his inferiors. Pride disdains the condescension of being an useful citizen; whilst Vanity courts every means of being so, however humble they may appear, or however irksome. The vain man is found superintending an hospital, listening to a national school-boy's task, or broiling over a turnpike-road in the middle of August. Without such a moving principle as vanity, how many useful employments must go begging for presidents and vice-presidents. Besides, a vain man in society is generally a very

pleasant one, if he has talents : as popularity is his hobby-horse, he is always accounted with his gentlest humours, and most attractive air ; whilst the proud man is a vexation to himself, and a disgusting character to others, lives unloved, and dies unlamented—

Pride hath no other glass
To shew itself but pride ; for supple knees
Feed arrogance, and are the proud man's fees.
He that is proud eats up himself : pride is
His own glass, his own trumpet, his own chronicle, &c.
Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida.

Arts and Sciences.

A doubt has been made by an ingenious, but sophistical writer,* whether the cultivation of the arts and sciences contribute to the peace and happiness of the world. The affirmative may be supported by a familiar instance. Who has not observed, on entrance into a nursery, that he has pacified the clamours of some children, and dried the tears of others, by an importation of some new play-things, which are their arts and sciences, and literary pursuits.

A Sequel to the former Article.

An Eastern Monarch and conqueror, who had invaded a nation superior to his own in learning,

* J. J. Rousseau.

and civilization, and had taken their principal city, of which a great and splendid library was the chief ornament, was advised by some of his officers to destroy it. "No," said the sagacious warrior, "let the captives have their playthings, and then they will live in peace and submission." It has often been observed, that scholars are not warlike, and that warriors are seldom scholars. Both delight, in their respective, but very different, playthings—books and guns.

Sallust

Has great vigour of expression, and depth of thinking, combined with very uncommon and noble sentiments. Yet we must regret that, amidst his splendid narrative, and brilliant diffusion of knowledge, he is subject to the common objection brought against classical historians, viz. want of authority to support his facts. We should laugh at a modern author, should he, in the beginning of his history, and in settling the origin of his nation, say, "Italy was peopled at first by Æneas and his associates on their return from Troy, (*sic accepi*) as I have heard." A monkish historian could not have founded his narrative on a slighter foundation.—*Bell. Catal. b. i. c. 6.*

Bon Mot of Joseph Scaliger.

It is very generally and justly observed, that

with regard to the pronunciation of the Latin tongue, different nations utter it in their own vernacular tones and accents. J. Scaliger, being engaged in conversation with a learned Scot, which was carried on in the Latin tongue, at the conclusion made an apology to the gentleman for not answering him. "I hope, sir, you will excuse my not replying; as I really do not understand the Scotch language."

Lovers of Arguments.

These are the greatest pests in society; ever ready to enter on an argument, and unwilling always, and often unable, to conclude one. The author of Hudibras has most aptly described these abusers of the art logical—

This pagan heathenish invention
Is good for nothing but contention:
For as in sword and buckler fight,
All blows do on the target light,
So when men argue, the greatest part
O' the contest falls on terms of art,
Until the fustian stuff be spent,
And then they fall to th' argument.

Canto 3d.

BonMot of Casaubon.

When in his youth, this eminent scholar first visited the college of the Sorbonne, his friend led him into the great hall, and observed, with much gravity of countenance, that disputes had been

carried on in this place for 400 years. "Pray, what have they decided upon," said Causabon very drily. It may perhaps be a solution of this difficult question, when we are told that the Sorbonnists were great polemical theologians, and much addicted in early time to scholastic divinity. This circumstance did not escape the wit of S. Butler,

He could raise scruples dark and nice,
And after solve 'em in a trice,
As it divinity had catch'd
The itch, on purpose to be scratch'd, &c.

Hudibras, canto 1.

Poets.

"Poeta nascitur non fit," seems rather an encouragement to unlearned poets, than a practical truth. The idea that a man is born a poet, and does not become so by study, &c. is hurtful to literature, as it sets folks on writing poetry, that cannot write even prose. Another great error is generated by the assertion, that obscurity is part of poetry, and necessary to its sublimity. If this were the case, writers of riddles and ænigmas would soar above epic poets, and tragic authors. If to write obscurely be a merit, to pursue the observation further, we must acknowledge that he who does not write at all, is an improvement upon that author who endeavours to make himself unintelligible.

"My wound is great, because it is so small :
 "Then it were greater, were there none at all."

A Noble Excuse.

It was a magnanimous reply of M. Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné to Henry III. of France, who expressed a wish that he would write the history of his reign, "I am too much the humble servant of your Majesty to be your historian." The converse of this sentiment would be equally true. A man may be too much the enemy of his sovereign to write his history with honest impartiality.

How difficult impartiality is in a writer of history, is strongly set forth by the great Tacitus. "When kings are alive, the fear of giving offence to them, and when they are dead, the hatred attached to their memories, are both equally fatal to the veracity of history."

Favourites.

The same acute observer and eloquent writer on politics remarks, "that the friends of kings seldom continue in their stations to the ends of their lives ; they are either by their masters dismissed, long tired of bestowing endless benefactions on them ; or the favourites, having no longer any hopes of receiving them, desert their royal masters.

Liberty and Bribery.

The theory of liberty is most clamorous, when bribery is most lucrative. It is in corrupt boroughs that we hear persons most loud in their boast of their love of liberty. What is their noise else, but the declaration, "that I hold my liberty of voting very high, and expect to be paid accordingly for giving it up, and so I must part with it for a valuable consideration ; and not be, at the same time by accepting a small bribe, both a fool and a rogue." The facetious bard has well described the *value* of liberty in voting,

For what's the value of a thing
But so much money as 'twill bring? *Hudibras.*

Good-Kind of People.

This is a description of people, vulgarly so called, whom every body knows, and yet few can commend. They are in general persons of very moderate abilities, very feeble passions, and very disputable integrity; for where there are no very marked features in a countenance, no decisive character can be ascertained. In natural history, they might be described of the snail kind: the evil that they do is not *quickly* discerned, whilst the good which they may perform is always a matter of doubt. But Poets describe these persons with

greater force than prose men can pretend to. Such persons are described by Dr. Young as those

Who want, while through blank life they dream along,
Sense to be right, and passion to be wrong.

Love of Fame, sat. iv. l. 89.

Some Modern Comedies.

Kotzebue, Schiller, and other German writers, seem to have infected the English stage with their lugubrious style. Pathos has rendered our comedy quite tragical. When some writers preserve a little regard for the nature of the comic genius, and are unwilling that their audience should cry all through their sad comedies, they endeavour by frequent puns to prevent this evil to themselves and others. Pope seems, by anticipation, to have described our modern comedians, and their sole motives for writing—

But fill their purse, our poet's work is done,
Alike to them by pathos or by pun. *Epist. i. v. 294.*

Modern Greeks. An Anecdote.*

As the present times convince us that the spirit of liberty in ancient Greece is not extinct in their posterity, the following authentic anecdote may be read with pleasure and interest. When the late Mr. Anson (Lord Anson's brother) was upon his

* This story, says Mr. Harris, was told me by Mr. Anson himself.

travels in the East, he hired a vessel to visit the Isle of Tenedos. His pilot, an old Greek, as they were sailing along, said, with some satisfaction, "There 'twas that our fleet lay." Mr. Anson demanded what fleet? "What fleet! replied the old man, (a little piqued at the question;) Why *our* fleet at the siege of Troy."—*Harris's Philolog. Enquiries*, vol. ii. p. 326.

Singular Use of the Word Embrace.

It is dangerous to sever a word, especially a verb, from its original combination, as it is in fact so altered as to become very awkward and ridiculous. To *embrace* an offer, an opportunity, or a proposition, are acknowledged and common phrases; but we smile at the old steward who wrote to his master that he was in pursuit of the purchasing some oxen; and that when he met some large and fat ones, his Lordship might depend upon him that he would immediately *embrace* them.—*Harris's Philolog. Enquiries*, vol. i. p. 199.

A singular Anti-Climax.

Those who ascend too high may meet with sad falls. The Sophi of Persia is called a star, whose crown is the sun, lord of the mountains Caucasus and Taurus, and of the four rivers Euphrates,

Tigris, Araxes, and Indus; the fountain of honour, the mirror of virtue, the rose of pleasure, and the nutmeg of delight.—See *Howel's Letters*.

Tobacco: an Anecdote from the Same Writer.

If one would try a pretty conclusion, how much smoke there is in a pound of tobacco, the ashes will tell him. Let a pound of tobacco be exactly weighed, and the ashes kept charily, and weighed afterwards; what is wanting of a pound weight in the ashes cannot be denied to have been smoke, which evaporated into air. I have heard that Sir Walter Raleigh won a wager of Queen Elizabeth on this nicety.

Conscience.

This word is apt to mislead the individual, and to superinduce bad habits of hypocrisy. When a man pretends to hold a court of conscience in his bosom, where he is judge and jury too, his conduct requires looking after. "No man," says an eminent writer,* "should be allowed, under the pretence of a liberty of conscience, to have no conscience at all."

Mercy.

We see daily instances of what is called mercy held out to persons whose crimes are manifestly

* Right Hon. Edm. Burke.

injurious to society, and from which much evil may accrue to others. Here tenderness of heart either prevails over the dictates of evidence or reason, or from the considering mercy withheld, whatever may be the case, as unjustly withheld. But, as says the above-mentioned writer, "mercy is not in opposition to justice: it is an essential part of it, and as necessary in criminal cases, as equity is in civil affairs to law." Our Immortal Bard hath spoken, with his usual powers of discrimination on mercy when justly or unjustly exercised—

Merely is not itself that oft looks so;
Pardon is still the nurse of second woe.
Measure for Measure.

The quality of mercy is not strain'd :
It droppeth, as the gentle dew of Heaven,
Upon the place beneath. *Merchant of Venice.*

A Parallel Case.

Plutarch, in his life of Nicias, relates a circumstance of this commander, which will remind the reader of a similar one recorded of Oliver Cromwell, who seems to have resembled the Grecian in more points than one. "He daily sacrificed to the gods, and keeping a divine, or soothsayer, in his house, he pretended to be consulting always about the commonwealth; whereas for the most part he enquired only of his private affairs, more especially

concerning his silver mines." "Nicias," adds his biographer, "is represented, by Thucydides, as a very superstitious man, and 'moped with godliness.'" In other parts of his character he very much differed from the English usurper, for he seemed to be deficient in personal courage. His great possessions," continues Plutarch, "brought about him many hangers on of various descriptions, for he patronised those who could do him mischief, no less than those who deserved well of him."—*Plutarch's Life of Nicias.*

Taste for Medicine.

Among the most singular refuges from absolutely doing nothing which idleness regulated by whim, flies to for temporary employment, is the habit of taking medicine. This propensity to think themselves ill, and knowing in nostrums, sometimes will run through a whole family, to the great benefit of the neighbouring apothecaries. Pope* relates a shrewd, though simple, observation of a country wench who lived in one of these families; who said that she heartily "thanked God that she was not born a gentlewoman, and would not be one for all the world."

* Letter to Miss Martha Blount.

Horace.

That indiscriminate praise which some scholars, or rather pedants, bestow on the ancients, have led them to find beauties in the odes of Horace, where more impartial readers would complain of irregularities and want of connection in the subject. A late writer, of taste and excellent sense, and who was himself a poet, has uttered the following strictures on some of the odes of Horace, that every sober reader will assent to. "In the ode, *Laudabant alii claram Rhodon aut Mytelenen*, we meet with so striking a want of connection, that many have believed some of it lost. The style of the ode, *O navis, referent in mare te novi*, borders upon the bombast; the ode to Fortune, though it has a splendid beginning, sinks in its progress; the celebrated ode, *Angustam amici pauperiem pati*, falls off remarkably towards the end, and introduces a new subject, and foreign to the rest of the piece; and in the ode, *Inclusam Danaen turris athenae*, we meet with some lines which are better suited to the *Sermones*."—*Disquisitions by Frank Sayers, M. D. 2d editt. Norwich, 1808.*

Boswell's Life of Dr. Johnson.

It seems wonderful (if wonder can reasonably be admitted in the history of man) that Boswell

should so correctly report Dr. Johnson's discourses and opinions, and yet make such foolish observations on them. When Boswell differs from his great friend, his objections are below all criticism. Sir J. Reynolds has indeed observed, in one of his discourses, that the habit of copying great masters in the art of painting, if carried too far, not only impedes the artist's improvement, but benumbs his faculties. When Boswell is employed on an original subject, his *History of Corsica*, his pen is more fluent, and his mode of thinking more manly. The overshadowing genius of Johnson hurt the humble plant that endeavoured to flourish under it.

Reason and Instinct.

When metaphysicians involve themselves in distinctions about reason and instinct, methinks, poor mortals do not seem to fare so well as irrational animals. Beasts are provided with instinct, to regulate their conduct, which it seems is another word for "reason ready made;" whilst man makes his own reason from scraps of experience, and in general a very indifferent manufacture it proves, and is often fabricated from very raw materials.

Errors and Misapprehensions.

These hallucinations of the mind (as Dr. Darwin calls them) arise from two very different causes,—an abundance of fancy, or a dulness of intellect. Tom understands you, as he imagines, before you have half enounced your proposition; Jack not till a long time after you have finished it. Thus the faculty divide bilious cases into two kinds; one arising from too little, and the other from too much, bile; yet both are distempers.

Cicero and Lord Chesterfield.

When the pagan philosopher and the christian nobleman undertook to lay down rules for our conduct in life, how widely do they differ in their sentiments and directions. The letters of advice from his Lordship to his son partake much of the heathen; and Cicero, in his Offices, delivers sentiments and precepts worthy of a christian divine. It must be acknowledged that both writers can boast of much eloquence of diction, and perspicuity of style, though their matter be so different.

Gibbon.

It has been asserted by Gibbon the historian, that no man is an hypocrite in his amusements,

but the truth of this apophthegm may be disputed. Fashion directs many of our sports; and she, tyrant like, presses many into her service against their will. I have seen many a sportsman return from the field rejoiced that the *toil* was surmounted, and that he was returning to a good dinner at the end of it, without his neck or his bones broken. He, no doubt, cursed, in his heart, an amusement, which neither his habits, his strength, his spirits, nor his pocket, qualified him to pursue; but which fashion commanded him to adopt.

Wine and Books.

Mr. Addison, in one of his Spectators, has said, that "Wine is not to be drank by every one that can swallow." The humour of this whole paper is not less manifest than the truth of this assertion. How few men become better in their tempers or minds, or in their health, by the use of wine, as it too often falls into abuse of it! Thus books are not to be read by all who can boast the privilege of a scholar; for how few men are so happy in their dispositions and taste, or so lucky in their teachers, as not to contract a liking to books that corrupt their morals, or bewilder their understandings.

Bayle.

The following observation from this learned and acute biographer may have a very good tendency to put philosophy in a real point of view, and may be very useful in these times, when every whipster thinks himself a philosopher. "Philosophy may be compared to certain corrosive powders, that having consumed the proud and spongy flesh of a wound, they would corrode even the quick and sound flesh, rot the bones, and penetrate to the very marrow. Philosophy is proper at first to confute errors; but if she be not stopped there, she attacks truth itself; and when she has full scope, she generally goes so far, that she loses herself, and does not know where to stop."

At Home and Abroad.

These different states are true prosaic representations of the *Allegro* and *Penseroso*. Aristotle says that the love of variety is one instance of the infirmities of human nature. However this may be, it is certain that many a man on a visit and at home are different persons outwardly and inwardly. His dress is more spruce, and his humour more gay.

Scarce past the turnpike half a mile,
How all the country seems to smile.

Lloyd's Cit's Country Box.

Most "family men" are leaving a burden behind them, the swarming cares of domestic life, which are not without a sting, and yet I trust not without honey-sweets at times.

Democritus and Heraclitus.

The account of these eminent sages, under the opposite characters of the Laughing and Crying Philosopher, is too ridiculous to be credited by any one who knows that they were both eminent for their learning and wisdom, and not comic or tragic actors. The admission of the truth of such an account of two sages, thus ludicrously portrayed, could arise only from the observation of these opposite characters often appearing in common life, as the Poet has described them : —

Nature hath fram'd strange fellows in her time :
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes,
And laugh, like parrots, at a bagpiper ;
And others of such vinegar aspect,
That they'll not shew their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

Merchant of Venice, act i. scene 1.

Marriage.

" Other legislators, knowing that marriage is the origin of all relations, and consequently the first element of all duties, have endeavoured by every art to make it sacred. The Christian religion, by confining it to pairs, and by rendering that relation

indissoluble, has by these two things done more towards the peace, happiness, settlement, and civilization of the world, than by any other part in this whole scheme of divine wisdom." — *Burke*.

To this sublime passage of that eminent statesman, we may add, for the reader's amusement, a poetical eulogy on this "reverend and honourable state."

It is a sign that nothing can assuage
Your love but marriage ; for such is
The tying of two in wedlock as is
The tuning of two lutes in one key ; for
Striking the strings of the one, straws will stir
Upon the strings of the other ; and in
Two minds link'd in love, one cannot be
Delighted but the other rejoiceth.

Lilly's Sappho and Phaon.

Pronunciation.

It is wonderful how different the same discourse appears, pronounced by a good and a bad reader. When Æschines, after his retreat to Rhodes, was one day reading aloud to some friends his rival's famous speech, and the hearers were lost in wonder at the eloquence of Demosthenes, "What," said he, "would you have thought, if you had heard *him* pronounce it?" Martial, in an epigram, has well illustrated this subject—

Those verses that you read, my friend, are mine ;
But as you read them, they may pass for thine.

Conversation.

To those who are too willing and eager to exhibit their superior powers of reasoning and quickness, the following lines will give a very wholesome and intelligible caution—

Would you be well received, where'er you go,
Remember each man vanquish'd is a foe ;
Resist not therefore with your utmost might,
But let the weakest think he's sometimes right :
He, for each triumph you shall thus decline,
Shall give ten opportunities to shine ;
He sees, since once you own'd him to excel,
That 'tis his interest that you should excel.

Essay on Conversation, by Benjamin Stillingfleet.

Absurdities in Architecture.

The Greeks and Romans, with all their taste, have committed considerable errors in their favourite art. The capital of the Corinthian order represents a basket, with flowers overflowing the edges, and a tile placed on the top of it. On this slender foundation the principal architrave of the building is often placed. Another error, still more disgusting to the eye and the reason, is a female figure supporting an architrave in the manner of a pillar. Modern architects, with more gallantry than good taste, have put cushions on the heads of their ladies, to enable them to carry their weights more easily. They, however, saw the error of

their predecessors, though their mode of obviating it was not very happy.

Images and Pictures in Churches.

Wherever controversial writers enter upon a subject, contention, rage, and misrepresentation take place of the pursuit of truth. Hence the custom of the Roman Catholics, of placing pictures, &c. in their churches, has been stigmatized as idolatrous. Pope Gregory, in a letter to Bishop Masilien, explains this matter very clearly. "*Aliud est enim picturam adorare, aliud per picturam historiam quid sit adorandum addiscere.*" It is one thing to make a picture an object of adoration, and another thing to look upon the same picture as a history of the good actions or character which it represents for our instruction and example. It was with this view that the ancient Romans placed statues of their heroes and other great men in their public streets, that the spectators might be animated with their examples. To illiterate persons in the Romish church, or in the Roman republic, they were more striking objects of instruction than historic writings.

*Seguina irritant animos demissa per aures,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus,*

Says a sensible Roman Poet.

Slow comes instruction through the sluggish ear;
Embodied truth is to the eye most clear.

Monasteries and Abbies.

How many persons, disgusted with the tollies, terrified at the misfortunes, and wearied with the dulness of the world, will read with approbation the following remarks of a very ingenious, though fanciful, writer, in the praise of monastic life. "Some monasteries and collegiate cells might well have been spared, and their revenues charitably employed in good towns and cities, at least, for men and women of all sorts and conditions to live in, and to sequester themselves from the cares and tumults of the world, that were not desirous or fit to marry, or willing to be troubled with common affairs."—*See Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy.*

Desultory Reading.

The youthful student would do well to give a serious attention to the following confession of a very laborious, learned, and miscellaneous student. "This roving humour I have ever had; and, like a ranging spaniel that barks at every bird he sees, leaving his game, I have followed all, saving that which I should. I have read many books to little purpose for want of good method. I have confusedly tumbled over divers authors in our libraries with small profit, for want of art, order, memory, and judgment."—*Ibid.*

Independence.

Such is the anxiety in some minds for this happy state of existence, that no exertion is thought painful, no forbearance irksome, when this fair prospect is in view—when the mind retreats on itself,

“Scar’d by the spectre of pale poverty.”

A young man should be aware, that, on starting in life, men of bad principles watch his errors, and take advantage of them; and learn to depend on himself. A. Pope, when he wrote the above quoted line, in his “Imitations of Horace,” felt the horrors he described; and by his own honourable exertion of the faculties with which he was blessed, became an independent man early in life.

Late Marriages.

The grand objection to persons entering into the state of marriage in advanced life is, that it is seeking the rose, when the season would have told us we could only find the thorn. Late marrying is adding a burden to a state in itself burdensome; it is as if we should ride double upon an old horse, who has not strength enough remaining to carry us safe singly. It is forming a wish to take a

"new lease," when most persons might exclaim,
in the words of the poet,

I have lived long enough : my May of life
Is fallen into the sear and yellow leaf.

Macbeth, scene 3.

History.

Plutarch, in his Life of Pericles, has very cautiously spoken of history. "It is a difficult matter to trace and find out the truth of any thing in history. On one hand, those who undertake to write history, living so long after the things were done, cannot arrive at a certain knowledge of such transactions as passed in the times before them. On the other hand, that history which is contemporary, and of the same standing as those actions and lives which it reporteth, doth, partly through envy and ill-will, partly through favour and flattery, disguise and pervert the truth."

Arts of a Demagogue.

In the same Life of Pericles, honest Plutarch well describes the method by which a popular man, in a democratic state, governs the people, by knowing their dispositions, and humouring their wayward fancies, and availing himself of their fickleness. The illustration is eminently

happy: "Pericles changed his conduct, and no longer became, as formerly, tame, and gentle, and familiar, with the populace, so as readily to give himself up to their pleasure, and to comply with the rabble, as a *steersman tacks about with the wind, through all the points of the compass.*"

Comfortable and Bonhomme.

These two words are peculiar to the two nations, whose views of ease and moral conduct, in many particulars, very much differ. A Frenchman loves finery in his house, but does not exclude dirt and negligence; which the English idea of "comfortable" so vehemently repels. *Bonhomme* is a term unknown to us, as "~~comfortable~~" is to the French; and may, perhaps, be best translated (as neither sex is excluded in the word) by the character which we call "a good kind of a body," or "a good kind of a man."

Liars.

It was very justly and very pointedly observed by honest old Montaigne, that these pests of society, were they to be well weighed, are cowards towards men, but brave before God; for a lie flies in the face of the Deity, but may possibly, for a time at least, escape the notice and punishment

of man. Dr. Johnson said well of cowards, that they were scoundrels, and were afraid of the consequences of truth and plain dealing, and tried to fly from them. Dr. Johnson was a lover of truth, and a man of great personal courage.

A Phaeton and One-horse Chaise.

How many friends every man has, and who are accounted good kind of men, who would shake our hands more cordially should they find us seated in a "well-appointed" phaeton, than when couching snugly in a one-horse chaise ! The friend feels some rays of consequence reflected on him from a splendid vehicle ; but a one-horse chaise is an opaque body, from which no light can be sent forth. In the same spirit, these dull, good kind of men, as they are called, are very obsequious to the wealthy, and very cool towards the more moderately endowed.

*A New Source of Nobility : suggested to the
Agricultural Societies.*

To encourage industry in China, it is related by travellers, that every year the Emperor in person holds the plough, and opens a certain quantity of soil, to set an example to his people of the use of

agriculture. A still greater encouragement is given by the Emperor of China, by conferring a title of the high orders on the best husbandman in the country. Surely he who enriches his native soil by extraordinary skill and diligence is as much, in the eye of reason, entitled to letters of nobility, as he who has defended it gallantly by sea or land, or protected the rights of his fellow-citizens by his knowledge of law, or his skill in legislation; and a "landlord" would then be a title of great esteem and utility.

A Judge properly attired.

Ælian, in his "Various History," b. xiv. c. 34, speaking of the Egyptians, relates, that the supreme judge in their civil courts (who was also their chief priest) wore about his neck, by a golden chain, an ornament of precious stones, called *Truth*; and that a cause was not opened, till the supreme judge had put on this ornament. Did such a custom prevail in our Courts, the counsel would then have a proper object to fix their eyes and attention; and truth would then, in more instances than at present, prevail in their pleadings over the interests of the clients, or even their own reputation, for gaining the cause by ingenuity and finesse.

Learning of Shakespeare.

The doubt which has arisen on the question of this great poet's *learning* must have proceeded, like many other absurd disputes, from ambiguous terms, and loose definitions of learning. John Dennis, the critic, in his three letters on the genius and writings of Shakespeare, strongly supported the learning of the poet; and the question has been lately put to rest for ever by the sagacity and erudition of the late Dr. Farmer, Master of Emanuel College, Cambridge. The learning of Shakespeare is well described in the lines of a contemporary bard :

His learning favours not the school-like gloss,
That most consists in echoing words and terms,
And soonest wins a man an empty name :
Nor only long or far-fetch'd circumstance,
Wrapp'd in the curious generalities of arts :
But a direct and analytic sum
Of the true worth and first effects of arts.

B. Jonson's Poetaster.

The great Lord Chatham.

The amusements of a man of genius deserve our notice. Lord Chatham in early life shewed great taste and talents in laying out grounds. En-

field Chase and Hayes, both near the metropolis, were the scenes in which his imagination and skill created beautiful views. The power to see beforehand the effect of fresh plantations in their progress and termination in full growth on the scenery which they were intended to adorn, Lord Chatham possessed in an eminent degree. He with equal felicity expressed the nature and seat of this faculty, by calling it the *prophetic eye of taste*.

Haughty Looks.

It has been observed by foreigners, that the women in England, if at all handsome, are apt to diminish the effect of their beauty by haughtiness of demeanour, unless when the admirer is a man of rank or opulence. This double charge of avarice and pride I would willingly confute universally, as I certainly can generally. Yet I would have my fair countrywomen recollect, that virtue and severity of manner are as little connected, as austerity of conduct is with our religion. Classical admirers can inform them, that, among the polished nations of antiquity, the Goddess of Love was known for her enchanting smiles and affability. A great admirer of the fair sex, and a great favourite with them, has spoken his thoughts

on this subject in a very gay poem, where every stanza ends with this appropriate burden against cruelty :

Votre bouche, et vós beaux yeux,
 Les rois de ma vie,
 Et votre ris gracieux,
 Avoient mon ame asservie.
 Vous m'aviez gagné le cœur,
 Mais quand on a trop de rigueur
 Ma foi je m'en ennuye.

Poésies de M. Voiture, 1666.

Love.

The poets, one after another, describe this passion under the figure of a *flame*, as if they were advising the reader to beware the burning of his fingers, should he come in contact with it. Shakespeare, who could make a metaphor out of the smallest matter, has singularly protracted this figure of speech, and illustrated its brevity of existence,

There lives within the *flame* of love
 A kind of wick and snuff, that will abate it.

Hamlet.

Quarles, in one of his *Centuries*, has made a happy distinction of this passion, when it possesses a wise or a foolish lover—"It is a wise man's bonfire, and a fool's furnace."—*Century iii. ch. 9.*

Thoughts on Death. From Montaigne.

The author laughs at all philosophers on this subject in a very happy way. "Philosophy enjoins us, that we should always have death before our eyes, to foresee and consider before the time; and then gives us rules and precautions to provide that this foresight and thought do us no harm. Just so do physicians; who throw us into diseases, to the end that they may have a subject for their drugs and art. If we have known how to live consistently and quietly, we shall know how to die so too. We trouble life with the care of death, and death with the care of life. The one vexes us, and the other frights us. It is not, in fact, against death that we prepare ourselves, but against the preparations of death."—*Montaigne's Essay, vol. iii. c. 12.*

Physiognomy. From the same.

This frank and natural writer expresses himself on this mysterious and fanciful subject with his usual penetration, ease, and good sense. "A man's countenance is but a slender security, yet is something to be regarded too; and were I to lash men, I would most severely scourge the wicked ones who belie and betray the promises that na-

ture has planted in their foreheads. I would with great severity punish malice in a courteous aspect. I believe there is an art in distinguishing affable from silly faces, rigid from the stern, malicious from the pensive, the coy from melancholy, and such other bordering qualities."—*Vol. iii. c. 12.*

N.B. It is here to be observed, that Montaigne confines this art of discrimination to the discovery of the *moral* qualities only; and does not, like Lavater, include intellect.

Mason and Hayley.

It is a very ingenious observation of an excellent critic of poetical merit,* that "among the fortunate circumstances that attended Homer, it was not one of the least that he wrote before general and abstract terms were invented." The truth of this observation is strongly illustrated by the poetry of Mason and Hayley; wherein the reader is continually involved in the mist of generalities and abstract terms, which are often personified, and fill the scenery with most unsubstantial shadows from the school of metaphysics. Even when these shadowy bards mean to draw visible objects,

* *Essay on Pope's Genius and Writings*, 2 vols. 8vo.

and indulge their readers with picturesque descriptions, they endeavour to give to

“airy nothings

“A local habitation and a name.”

Cards.

The playing at cards, unconnected with any species of gaming, is innocent, and, in some cases, useful. When companies meet together of men and women with little sympathy, rather gregariously than socially,

“The feast of reason, and the flow of soul,”

is little to be expected. The card-table then removes that of the bottles and glasses; and the tea being taken at the same time in which the games commence, all opportunities for indulging in too much wine is prevented among the men, and the love of prate and scandal intercepted among the ladies. Besides, *whist* is an employment of the intellect; and among good-mannered people can lead to nothing harmful; as avarice is often excluded by the smallness of the stakes, and the competition of skill.

Adapting Poetry to Music.

“The sound must seem an echo to the sense,” says Pope, in his *Essay on Criticism*, and pro-

ceeds with some following lines to exemplify his doctrine—how unsuccessfully, the “Rambler” has shewn, with his usual force of sagacity and perspicuity. A musical man, to use a common phrase, may think that certain sounds express the sense of certain sentences and words better than any other mode of articulation; but let this music in his soul be an argument to him, and let others judge for themselves, and prefer a good reader to a chaunter.

The Subject continued.

The difficulty of connecting poetry with music is very great, and its success, of course, very uncertain. The late Mr. Shenstone, who was a musical as well as a poetical genius, says, in one of his letters, “I presume that nothing can go further than the Oratorio of the ‘Messiah.’ It seems the best composer’s best composition; yet I fancied that I could observe some parts in it wherein Handel’s judgment failed him, and where the music was not equal, or was even *opposite* to what the words required.”—*Shenstone’s Letters*, (93,) ed. 1758, 12mo.

Women.

M. d’Alembert has well retorted on the accusations against the female race, by founding them on

the ill conduct of men in their education. "Were you just in your complaint, Where can we find an amiable and virtuous woman? the reason might be found in the state of subjection and degradation to which we reduce women, the restraints we put upon them, the frivolous conversation, disgraceful to them and ourselves, with which we entertain them, as though they had not reason, or deserved to have any : add to all this the wretched education we bestow on them, which teaches them to be always acting a part, concealing every sentiment of their minds, withholding all their opinions, and suppressing every thought that arises in their bosoms."—*M. D'Alembert's Letter to Rousseau.*

The Subject continued.

At present, in England, a more generous system of education is bestowed on our young females ; their conversation is vastly improved, their manners more free, their sentiments and opinions uttered with ease and perspicuity ; and their understandings entitle them to demand, from men of the best education and parts, respectful attention. In the time of Swift and Pope, it appears that women were not so well instructed ; and, allowing for the satirical and severe disposition of the Dean of St. Patrick's, perhaps the following lines may be con-

sidered as no exaggerated account of women in general, about his time.

A set of phrases learnt by rote,
 A passion for a scarlet coat.
 When at a play to laugh or cry,
 Yet cannot tell the season why.
 Never to hold her tongue a minute,
 While all she prates has nothing in it.
 Whole hours can with a coxcomb sit,
 And take his nonsense all for wit.
 Her learning mounts to read a song,
 But half the words pronouncing wrong, &c.

Dr. Swift's Furniture of a Woman's Mind. Written 1727.

Poets.

It is astonishing when we consider what advantage poets have over men of cool reasoning. The man of business, and the man of study, if they be for a moment led astray by a ray of fancy in their rational pursuits, fall into very pernicious errors in their calculations. On the contrary, the poet, the more he wanders from reality and truth, the more he is indebted to his imagination, the more he exercises his poetical faculties, and may exclaim, in the language of honest Jack Falstaff, "Is it not my vocation, Hal?" But Fancy is sometimes a skittish jade, and the poor bard may sometimes find that Reason's light is a more safe guide through life than the *ignis fatuus* of imagination.

Orators

Seem to resemble poets in one striking circumstance, viz. their power of influencing our minds without the aid of reason, and, perhaps, better without it. Gibbon, the historian and orator, depends more on his faculty of talking than arguing. M. Buffon, the great animal historian, covers his dubious facts, and his more dubious inferences, with the splendour of his oratory; and Voltaire, by his wit, (a kind of short-hand oratory,) shews that a very easy and beaten path opens to persuasion, which is very far apart from reason and just argument. Ovid has well marked the easy abuse of this faculty of eloquence—

*Dicitur innocuas ut agat facundia causas,
Protegit hæc sones immeritosque premit.*

De Tristibus, l. 2.

'Tis said, indeed, that eloquence
Is a staunch friend of innocence;
But yet, alas! how oft we see
It takes for wicked men a fee.

Gibbon, the Historian.

The following observation of M. D'Alembert, on writing history, seems very applicable as a description of the philosophic style of the writer on the Rise and Fall of the Roman empire. "An historian resembles, in his duty, a person who, as a witness,

makes a certain deposition of facts, but if he mixes comments with them, he will be suspected of being a partial narrator. Moreover, it seems that the style of the writer may be such as to bring the author's partiality in question; but whatever side he takes, the least tedious style is the best." How far the pompous and theatrical style of Gibbon is monotonous and fatiguing, let better critics determine. His narration is in the Venetian style of colouring, though the correctness of his outline has been thought by readers of profound learning not to be conformable with the correctness of the Roman school.

Rings.

A. Gellius, in his tenth book and tenth chapter, relates the custom of the Greeks and Romans wearing a ring on the left hand, and upon the finger next to the least. He quotes Appian, in his Egyptian history, as giving this reason for the custom, "that it was discovered, by the anatomists of that country, that a small nerve extended from that finger on the left hand all along to the heart, and so the finger above mentioned was entitled to this honourable mark." Pancerollus seems to give a more obvious reason for the ring being placed on the left hand, &c. viz. that it was not

liable to the danger which the activity of the right hand might often expose it. The fancy, however, is more gratified by the Egyptian narrative, in our present use of that finger as a place for the *marriage* ring, viz. that it should have a connection with the *heart*, and become a symbol of the *cordial* attachment which it thus represents, and of the duties which it implies, when the husband trembles to think

Of the loss of her,
Who, like a jewel, has hung twenty years
About his neck, and never lost her lustre.

Henry VIII. scene 3.

Humble Stations.

In the Latin language, men who have chosen a situation remote from the bustle of life are called "*umbratiles viri*," men who delight in the shade. The figure of speech is elegant and expressive. They who live too near the sun are represented as men of fiery passions and strong sensual appetites, unknown to the cooler and more shady regions of the north. This tropical state of the body's humours and the mind's affections contributes little to ease, or to any state susceptible of happiness; and those storms or violent currents of air that are felt on the cloud-capt mountain, become gentle zephyrs in the vallies below.

Envy among Contemporaries, &c.

It is said, on high authority, that "a prophet has no honour in his own country." It may also be said that authors meet with a similar ill fate. Distance of place and distance of time put objects in a very different point of view. In Horace's age, writers required the lapse of a century to insure their fame. The great Lord Bacon was aware of this envy among his contemporaries, and in his last will has these remarkable words, "my name and memory I leave to foreign nations, and to mine own country after some time is passed over!"

Modern Superstition and Ancient the same in appearance.

How lively is this ancient description of modern *saints*. "The superstitious person utterly baffles the saying of *Pythagoras*, 'that we are then best, when we come near the gods;' for the superstitious man is then in his worst and most pitiful condition, when he approaches the temples and oratories of the gods. So that I cannot but wonder at those who charge atheism with impiety, and in the mean time acquit superstition. The ignorant devotee would fain be pleasant and gay,

but cannot. Whilst the whole town is filled with odours and incense, he, poor soul, is entertained with a sad mixture of hymns and sighs.—*Platarch on Superstition.*

Epitaphs.

It is a well-known truth, that death is a leveller of all; but that it does, in many cases, elevate characters, to which little *living* merit was ascribed, epitaphs in various instances proclaim. Should a person judge from reading these inscriptions in any church, or its environs, he would imagine that all virtue and goodness had expired with the lives of those whose epitaphs he had been perusing. He would return to the business or the pleasures of the world and his acquaintance, with little hopes of finding such very excellent characters, such as he had lately contemplated on the tombs. He would soon be at a loss to understand how so many noble characters should have left the world on a sudden, and not at least have bequeathed their examples among those who remained behind them. This wonder will remain, till he shall recollect, that poets often write epitaphs, and rich men pay for them.

Corneille.

This French writer seems to sacrifice nature totally to national taste. His heroes are all Frenchmen; and witticism, according to Gallic *goût*, is not excluded from circumstances of the most grave and lugubrious situation. Polyencte the Martyr, in the contemplation of his death, can speak *very prettily*, and exclaims on the pleasures of life on being about to quit the world:

Toute votre félicité,
Sujette à l'instabilité,
En moins de rien tombe par terre;
Et comme elle a l'éclat du verre,
Elle en a la fragilité.

Imitated,

Ah ! what is thy felicity ?
'Tis all unfix'd and all unsound;
And, in the twinkling of an eye,
It tumbles piece-meal on the ground.
Bright as the glass it is to view ;
And is, alas ! as brittle too.

Wit and Memory.

It is observable, that a great memory is sometimes unattended with any vast extent of intellect; and that such persons are more fond of quoting than of reasoning on any subject. Memory with

many an audience passes for native wit or understanding, which occasions such persons to reflect little, and keep their wits uncultivated. This matter seems attempted to be explained in our great moral poet—Pope :

Thus in the soul, while memory prevails,
The solid power of understanding fails;
Where beams of warm imagination play,
Memory's soft figures melt away.

That wits have short memories is a well-known proverb; and common experience will teach us, that memory by itself creates bold talkers and timid reasoners.

Female Education and Accomplishments.

We might be surprised in a common writer of novels to see this subject treated at once with such pregnant brevity, and so much perspicuity. "A well-informed mind," says the writer, "is the best security against the contagion of vice and folly. The vacant mind is ever on the watch for relief, and ready to plunge into error to escape from the languor of idleness. Store it with ideas, teach it the pleasure of thinking, and the temptations of the world without will be counteracted by the gratifications derived from the world within.

Thought and cultivation are necessary equally to the happiness of a country and city life. In the first place, they prevent the uneasy sensations of indolence, and afford a sublime pleasure in the taste they create for the beautiful and the grand : they make dissipation less an object of necessity, and consequently of interest."—*Mysteries of Udolpho*, vol. i. p. 16.

Plays and Paintings.

Much fastidious and false criticism has been displayed on these two popular subjects, and grounded upon a wrong supposition, viz. that they must be *exact* imitations of their objects. Now some fallacy with regard to the eye and mind must take place in both. A plain surface in a picture cannot *really* represent projecting figures, but by means of light and shade. Should a player mutter *to himself* the secret workings of his mind, the audience would not hear him ; and much wag-gery of observation would be lost to the audience, were not the actors allowed to express their thoughts "*aside*," though much grace and much of propriety are thereby sacrificed. But licences, poetical and pictorial, must be allowed to the best artists in their respective pursuits. Practice tells this. When Alexander the Great made some

false criticisms on the works of Apelles, his colour-grinder laughed at the monarch's ignorance of the subject, on which he had undertaken to speak without theory or practice.

Voltaire.

What a lesson has this amusing, acute, and unprincipled writer given on the danger of metaphysical pursuits, even to uncommon intellects. He ended his researches in *philosophy* by settling in fatalism.* Gray the poet has said, with poignant wit, and just contempt of this *then* fashionable philosopher, "He must have a very good stomach that can digest the *crambe recoccta* of Voltaire. Atheism is a vile dish, though all the cooks of France combine to make new sauces to it."—*Gray's Letters*, 4to. p. 385.

Ibid.

Voltaire, who prefers telling a lively story, to investigating the truth of a dubious one, relates, that he often asked Pope why Milton did not write his grand poem in rhyme? and that Pope answered, "because he could not." This seems very improbable to have been the opinion of the

* Questions sur l'Encyclopedie, part 19.

hard of Twickenham with respect to the preference to be given to rhyme, as his acknowledged *master* in this part of the art, John Dryden, used to hold the opinion, "that though rhyme might add sweetness to verse, yet it diminished the sense."

Rhyme.

A very elegant writer, and excellent classical scholar, has spoken very decidedly, and perhaps justly, on this modern appendage to poetry, which we call rhyme. "Rhyme is rather a burden on versification than an ornament. It loads it with useless epithets: it introduces affected phrases, and invests it with a tawdry dress: it often, by extending the paragraph, lessens the force of it: it often occasions a bad and weak line to be introduced, in order to bring in a good one.—*Fenelon, Letters to M. De la Motte: à Cambray, 1719.*

N.B. Is not this more observable in the French than in English versification, from the poverty of the former language?

President Montesquieu.

From the upright character which this eminent writer on "the Philosophy of Laws" has always

supported, we may trust his opinion of the literary character of his contemporary, Voltaire. Speaking of his great work, "As to M. de Voltaire, he has too much wit to understand me; besides, most of the books which he reads, he writes himself, and then reviews and applauds them." Speaking afterwards of Voltaire's flight from Berlin, after lamenting his forlorn state, in consequence of his abrupt dismissal from the Court of Prussia, adds, in a phrase not easily to be translated, though very intelligible to his friend, "Le bon esprit vaut beaucoup mieux que le bel esprit." --*Letters to Count Guasco.*

Acquaintance.

After a "certain age," (to use a French phrase,) how little we wish for company of this description, whose kindnesses may indeed blossom in common attentions, but seldom exuberate into the mature fruit of friendly affections! Indeed, what are acquaintances in general, but dubious things; sometimes spies on our words and actions, sometimes latent rivals in our schemes, and selfish allies in our pleasures; but an old friend is the "core of the heart." Honest Ben has well advised, on this important and difficult subject, the prudent choice of friends:

True happiness

Consists not in the multitude of friends,"

But in the worth and choice; nor would I have

Virtue a popular regard pursue;

Let them be good that love me, tho' but few.

B. Jonson's Cynthia's Revels.

Novels.

The grand objection made to this species of composition is, that they continually, often falsely, and generally too warmly, treat of the passion of love, to the corruption of the young of both sexes, and especially of the fairest part of the creation. Novels remind us of French engravings, where Cupids, whatever may be the subject, flourish and abound in the frontispiece, vignettes, and tail-piece. That right pleasant poet, the author of the "Fairie Queen," seems aware that grave persons would object to his frequent love-stories in his very amusing poem, and thus commences his introduction to his fourth book:

The rugged forehead, that with grave foresight,

Wields kingdoms' causes, and affairs of state,

My looser rhymes I wote* doth sharply wite,†

For praising love, as I have done of late,

And magnifying lovers' dear debate;

* Wote, know.

† Wite, blame, Saxon.

By which frail youth is oft to folly led,
Through false allurements of that pleasing bate,
That better were in virtues disciplined,
Than with vain poem weeds to have their fancies fed.

Fairie Queen, 4th book.

Operas.

Much inconsiderate abuse has been thrown on these compositions by ignorant persons, and pedants under the bondage of classic lore. Yet little do these latter critics recollect how much the modern opera resembles the Greek dramatic pieces, in which the poet seems often to have veiled his head to the musician. Many single lines in the plays of Euripides seem entirely subjugated to the musical performer; as their construction, from being single lines, is often very crabbed, and their metrical melody, unassisted by music, seems much obstructed. The reader, if he has any prejudices against an opera, well composed both by poet and musician, attended with all its proper accompaniments, will lay them aside on reading a modern writer.—See *Essay on the Opera*, by Count Algarotti, F.R.S. F.S.A. London, 1767, in English.

Hint to Modern Philosophers.

A very appropriate censure on the writings of David Hume may be found in a passage of a very

learned and ingenious *Pagan*, that ought to have been a caution (as it is a damning clause) to this wily, acute, and unfair writer on religious subjects: "Mala et impia consuetudo est contra Deos disputandi, sive ex animo id fit, sive simulatè." It is a very bad and impious habit, that of raising disputes in matters of religion, whether it be done seriously, or by inuendo.—*Cicero de Naturâ Deorum*, b. xi. c. 67.

Ovid's Metamorphoses.

Marlame Necker† conjectures that Ovid founded his "Metamorphoses" on natural history, and explained natural phænomena by poetic fables. She instances the story of Alcyone turned into a bird, and who goes in search of her husband's corpse. Some particulars belonging to the natural history of the kingfisher are indeed mentioned there, but do not seem applicable to that story in particular. Dr. Darwin's "Loves of the Plants" are a fine specimen of the union of poetry and natural history, and make Ovid, compared with our poet in this respect, very obscure, feeble, and contemptible in both characters.

* *Mélanges Extraits des MSS. de Madame Necker* : édit. 1783, Paris, 3 tomes, 8vo.

Old Age.

An ingenious and amusing writer* has given as a reason for the diminution of respect paid to old men in modern times, viz. the art of writing, which enables the young to have recourse to those sources of information, which formerly were sought in the memory of old persons. But if books are now the sources of our knowledge, the older a man is, it may be presumed that the more learned he is ; and so he may still be looked up to by his inferiors in years and erudition. A more obvious cause of the want of respect to old men is the modern education of young people ; who, being too early brought forward in the world, assume an equality with all persons, whatever their ages may be.

Female Society

Is at all times so necessary to the enjoyment of life, that the marriage of persons late in life is not to be wondered at, nor ridiculed, as it often is unjustly, unless the old man affects the character of a lover. Let such persons consider the attachment as friendship, and choose persons equal, or nearly so, to their own ages, and comfort may be the product of it ; for surely, when reason, and not folly, which love generally is, makes the bargain, the result is likely to be more satisfactory to both

* Sketches of the History of Man.

parties. To reason in love is allowed by prose men, as well as poets, to be hardly compatible with the nature of poor mortals, at least in youth.

Mythology, a convenient one.

Gibbon, the historian, has shrewdly observed, that self-love has great dexterity in advancing her favourite positions. An example of the truth of this observation may be adduced in that mythological doctrine, which inculcates the belief of an evil genius governing human actions. All our errors, follies, and even vices, may be put on the back of this evil genius, and men may plead for their miscarriages, as a witty Poet* has done for those of the fair sex, upon his system in astrology, not dissimilar to this—

That when weak women go astray,
The stars are more in fault than they.

Hints to Reformers.

When Pacuvius Calavius proposed to the people of Rome to elect a new senate, and to nominate those whom they would wish to put in the places of the members which they should dismiss, the great Roman historian relates, that, at the mention of every nominee, some objection was stated to the moral or political character of the persons nominated, till P. Calavius grew tired of so many

* Prior.

cavils at the persons named; and the result of his consideration on the experiment made by him was, that known ills were easiest to be endured; and that the old senators, whom they had kept in custody during this appeal, should be set at liberty, and restored to their former dignity and situations.—*Livy, b. xxiii. sec. 5.*

Hints to Agriculturists.

As poets are considered as a race most liable to anger, so are agriculturalists famed for their propensity to complain of the weather, seasons, &c. A farmer does not consider, or does not perhaps know, that wheat and oats were imported into this country, and where they are native plants they require no cultivation, as oats in some parts of America. In Sicily, as Diodorus Siculus relates, wheat grew wild without any culture. About Mount Tabor, in Palestine, barley and oats grow spontaneously; and in some parts of India, wheat will grow unaided by culture. The English farmer, therefore, who complains of his bad harvest and crops, should recollect that it is not the fault of England that it does not thrive in plants which were imported into it from other climes more adapted to them.—*Lord Kaimes' Sketches of the History of Man, p. 71, note.*

Freethinkers:

Men who claim a freedom in thinking, with regard to matters of religion and politics, do not contend for an abstract right of thought, but mean to carry the same self-privileges into action. Like the declaimers for freedom in politics, they do not mean to benefit mankind at large by their theories, but to give to their own actions a greater latitude. Selfishness is the motive in both cases, and gives rise to such empty and unintelligible nonsense, that wiser men are on their guard against it; whilst timid persons attend to it with undue awe. The writings of my Lord Shaftesbury are, in point of argument and wit, extremely contemptible; and he has long survived his fame as an author, founded on the privilege of a peer; and his right of *seignior*y can make his base coin no longer current.

Parental Affection

Is too frequently turned upside-down. Affection and kindness predominate, among many parents, in excessive indulgence to children, before their degree of reason entitles them to it. When, in more mature years, the advance of reason in children takes place, the indulgence diminishes in parents; and the love of check and restraint

becomes then more oppressive, as the force of reason strengthens in the child. How often do infants appear playthings to parents, who, in more adult years, seem, if not their aversion, too often objects of irksome severity; and adult children have too much reason to exclaim, in the simple but expressive language of Locke,* “Papa, when will you die?”

Man of the World.

The following description of “a man of the world” is drawn by Father Bourdaloue,† the famous pulpit orator in France, and seems creditable to his character as a man of penetration, and an eloquent writer. “A man of the world must be odious to himself, when he reflects on his conduct; for what is more hateful than an ambitious, jealous, and interested man? He is professedly an enemy of all other men, I mean all who oppose his pursuits, or thwart his schemes. He is a man who sincerely loves no one, and who can not expect that any one can love him; for he has himself only in view, and refers every thing to his own purposes. He never sees the prosperity of another without envy, and his merit without a plan to tarnish it; to sink the fame of the one,

* On Education.

† Sermon on the Epiphany.

and demolish the good fortune of the former, whenever his own interest calls on him to attempt it. He is not only the most detestable character, but the most detested. Though he persists in his own character, yet he at the same time hates it; so that while he maintains these principles in his own person, yet when he sees them acted upon by another, he marks him down as a villain and a knave."

Good Manners.

We often see that the ceremonious part of the etiquette of behaviour is very punctiliously observed by men who evidently have never understood, or been actuated by, the spirit which should direct it. A dancing master may certainly teach his pupil to come into a room of company without embarrassment, and with bows proper to the ladies and gentlemen who await his entrance; but that check of self-love on the various parts of conversation, where the feelings of others are to be consulted, must be taught by internal feelings. The *under-bearing* person in conversation is not that man who comes in with a fine bow and an elegant grin, ~~but the~~ man of sensibility, who is unwilling, and even uneasy, in advancing himself into notice. The Lord Chesterfield, who wrote the letters to his son on polished manners, &c.

is reported to have by rudeness so provoked a man, much his inferior in rank, as to have produced a repartee on his own person, too gross to be mentioned.

Sweeping Clauses.

Some persons never assert or make observations with any check from thought or prudence. T. with a precise countenance, and measured tones of voice, declares he never reads *novels* ; and B. who prides himself on his liberal education, on being asked his opinion about a new play, replied, he never read plays? Are we to suppose these gentlemen never heard of Gil Blas or Tom Jones, or of one William Shakespeare ! Perhaps they might, and have forgotten them in the midst of balls, races, and electioneering turmoils.

Two Opposite Characters.

G. always assents to whatever is said in conversation : R. always has something to say in opposition to the last man who spoke. Yet G. is as ignorant on most topics as R. ; but the former is a man of weak nerves, and cannot bear the agitation of dispute, and the burden of controversy. R. is a man of robust constitution and loud voice, and is very happy to talk on all occasions ; and finding that it is an easier business to contradict,

then to bring forward a proposition, he is always on the opposition side; and, of course, thought, by many persons, to be the most sensible and acute of the two—

Not by the dint of carnal reason,
But indefatigable teasing.

Hudibras.

Plutarch.

The life of Alexander the Great, by this author, is the most pleasant piece of biography extant, among the ancients. The following anecdotes shew the force and beauty of Alexander's character.

His Affection to his Mother.

Though he loved his mother Olympias, he never would let her interfere in matters of state, which she was too much inclined to, yet her importunities never diminished his affection for her. On reading a long letter from Antipater, full of accusations against Olympias, "I wonder," said he, "that Antipater should not know that one tear of a mother effaces a thousand such letters as these."

*His Chastity, and delicate Conduct to Darius's
Wife and Daughters, when his Captives.*

He diminished nothing of their equipage, or of the respect formerly paid them, but treated

these illustrious prisoners according to their quality and virtue, not suffering them to hear or receive, or so much as to apprehend, any thing that was indecent, or to the prejudice of their honour ; so that they seemed rather lodged in *some holy temple*, where they enjoyed their privacy sacred and uninterrupted, than in the camp of an enemy. Not that he wanted temptation, for the wife of Darius was accounted the most beautiful princess then living.

His Hatred of Idleness and Effeminacy.

When he perceived his favourites fall into the luxurious manners of the people of Asia, that Agnon, the Teian, wore silver nails in his shoes, and Leonatus employed several camels to bring him powder out of Egypt, and that they had servants to wait on them in their chambers and baths, he reprov'd them with great mildness and discretion. He reasoned with them how it was possible for any one who pretended to be a soldier, either to look well after his horse, or to keep his armour bright, who thought much to let his hands be serviceable to what was nearest to him, his own body : adding, in the tone of a philosopher, " Are ye not aware that the end and perfection of our victories is to avoid the vices and infirmities of those whom we subdue ?"

His Magnanimity.

When his followers were grown rich, and consequently proud, and longed to indulge themselves in pleasure and idleness, and were perfectly weary of the toils and inconveniences of war, and by degrees became so ungrateful and insolent as to speak ill of him behind his back; all which he bore very patiently, observing, "It became a king well to do good to others, and be ill spoken of."

His Good Sense and Generosity.

When Taxilis, a wise and rich king in India, at an interview with Alexander, said, "To what purpose should we make war upon one another, if your design of coming into these parts be not to rob us of our water or our necessary food, which are the only things which wise men are obliged to fight for? As for other riches, as they are esteemed in the eye of the world, if I am better provided than you, I am ready to share them with you; if Fortune has been more liberal to you, I will accept your favours, and acknowledge you my benefactor." This speech so pleased Alexander, that, embracing him, he replied, 'Do you think by your fair speeches and affable behaviour to bring yourself off from fighting in this interview? No, you shall not escape so, for I will contend with you in

conferring benefits, and you shall not prove my superior in bestowing gifts;' and immediately ordered that one thousand talents should be given to King Taxilis.—*Life of Alexander. v. 4. Plutarch translated by several hands.*

*His Activity, Courage, Judgement, and Skill,
when a Boy.*

When Bucephalus was first offered to Philip, he was refused by the king, to whom he was so intractable as to be useless. Alexander, who had observed the animal, proposed to mount him, and taking him by the bridle led him to face the sun, as he had noticed that the horse seemed afraid of his shadow. Patting him, he vaulted into his seat and put him soon to full speed, and returned to the spectators without any accident, to the great delight and astonishment of Philip, who exclaimed, "Oh, my son, look out for another kingdom worthy of thy great soul, for Macedonia is too little for you!"

His Love of Literature.

Among the treasures and other booty that were taken from Darius there was a very curious little box, which being presented to Alexander for a great rarity, he asked those about him what they thought fittest to be laid up in it; and when they

had delivered their opinions, he told them he esteemed nothing so worthy to be preserved in it as Homer's Iliad. He sent very great presents to his old tutor Leonidas, which he had taken at the capture of Tyre and Gaza.

Hint to Old Persons.

It was wisely said by the late author of the Rambler, that men growing old ought to *repair* their friendships.* This metaphor is very happy, and reminds the reader of a kindred one in a still greater Poet. A lover exclaims to his absent mistress,

Oh, thou that dost inhabit in my breast,
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless ;
Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall,
And leave no memory of what it was.

Repair me with thy presence, Sylvia fair.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona, act v. scene 4.

Titles,

Though honourable in their intent to distinguish persons eminent for their virtues, talents, and knowledge, yet become the properties of men of no "mark or likelihood." This man becomes a lord, because he has lent money to a prime minister: this buys the honour of being a baronet, a banker perhaps, or a rich and constant supporter

* That is, by new materials, viz. new friends.

of Administration. Yet some are so little as to think themselves great with such acquirements; and there are others who admire and mock them, and well know that

Where there are no difference in men's worth,
Titles are jests. *Beau. and Fletch.*

The title of esquire does not require any purchase, and is so common as to be quite a joke.

A Multitude of Friends.

Plutarch very beautifully illustrates the folly of searching or wishing for many friends, a wish founded on experience. "As a child cropping several sorts of flowers is foolishly and uselessly delighted for a time with each in its turn, till one effaces the image of the other from his mind and fancy; so we of riper years, from an inbred affectation of novelty, and disdain of things already possessed, take up frequently with the first promising aspect of every fresh and new blooming friend, and when we have scarce fixed on one, our love immediately palls there, whilst we as passionately pursue some other."—*Plutarch's Essay on the Folly of seeking a large Number of Friends.*

Friends of the Great.

At first we congratulate great folks on their numerous train of friends; but let us look into

their kitchens, and we shall see as great a number of flies busy there in their attendance, who soon vanish when the dishes are all empty and clean; so would the former set of insects vanish from their dining-rooms, were there no longer any rich viands and wines to detain them. — *Ibid.*

The Retort Valiant.

Theano, a famous Grecian philosopher, and, as the French express it, “a sayer of good things,” retorted upon an enemy who had abused him, with this sharp reproof, “We both lose our labour: you revile me, and I praise you always, and no one believes either of us.” An English poet has imitated this sarcasm with his usual ease of diction:

You are always speaking ill of me,
And I speak always well of thee;
But spite of all our noise and pother,
The world believes nor one nor t’other.

M. Prior.

Degrading Allusions.

An author should be cautious of rendering his subject liable to these degradations. Plutarch, speaking of the ceasing of many of the oracles, imputes it to the world’s being thinner peopled at that time than formerly. “The Gods,” says he,

" would not deign to use so many interpreters of their wills to so small an handful of people." The reader here immediately ascribes this allusion to strolling players being deterred from an exhibition of their dramatic performances, because they were afraid of having a " thin house."

Heinsius.

This eminent commentator has a fine reflection on entering his study : " Plerumque in quâ simul ac pedem posui, pessalum obdo foribus. Ambitionem autem, amorem, libidinem, avaritiam excludo; quorum parens est ignavia, imperitia nutrix. Et ipso æternitatis gremio, inter tot illustres animos sedem mihi sumo cum ingenti quidem animo, ut subinde me misereat, qui felicitatem hanc ignorant." " As soon as I enter my study, by shutting the door I exclude ambition, love, lust; and avarice, the offspring of idleness, and whose nurse is the want of erudition. Here, in the very bosom of eternity, I take my side amongst the illustrious souls which surround me, and compassionate the greatest nobles, to whom this pleasure is a stranger."

Lycurgus and Plato.

Lycurgus, the Spartan lawgiver, is said to have collected together all the works of Homer which

could be found in Asia Minor, and to have introduced them into Greece. Plato, on the contrary, when he planned a commonwealth, resolved to exclude all poets from his state. The readers of poetry will rejoice in the reflection, that Lycurgus was the founder of a real commonwealth, and Plato only dreamed of his, and his wild notions subsided in theory.

Ancient Mythology.

The ancients, with the dexterity of self-love, erected their passions into deities. Temples to Victory, to Venus Publica, to Fortune, to Theseus, for runaway slaves, were erected in their principal cities. Some temples were free to malefactors of all kinds; so that the ancients not only sacrificed to the virtues, but built temples to sanctify their vices. Yet we shall hear a christian writer* of ancient history talk with great complacency of the *elegant* mythology of the ancients. —See *Harwood and Adams's Greek and Roman Antiquities*.

Cicero.

It seems singular that so great an orator, and, of course, master of so many of the figures and

* Gibbon.

modes of speech peculiar to poets, should fail to be himself even a moderate versifier. One line is upon record, as the production of his poetic efforts; in which a pun and a rhyme are combined,

"O fortunatum natam me consule Romam."

It seems he was also as indifferent a critic in poetry, when he speaks of Lucretius, and says, "Lucretius has few luminous passages which display genius, but is generally artificial."*

Sir Isaac Newton.

The portrait of this great man forms a very strong exception to any rule that writers on physiognomy have laid down to distinguish a man of genius by his countenance. In a letter of Bishop Atterbury to M. Thiriot, he says, "in the whole air of his face and make there was nothing of that penetrating sagacity which appears in his works. He had something rather languid in his look and manner, which did not raise any great expectation in those who did not know him." At Newnham, near Oxford, the seat of Earl Harcourt, is a picture, in which the character and air of the face exactly correspond with the Bishop's description.

* See Book ii. Epist. to his Brother, 2.

A Proser.

The author of the *Picturesque*, &c. 3 vols. 8vo. to illustrate the sameness and dulness of Mr. Browne's genius in landscape, compares him facetiously with a *proser*. "I have sometimes seen a *proser* quite forlorn in the company of a man of brilliant imagination. He seemed to be dazzled with excess of light, his dull faculties totally unable to keep pace with the other's rapid ideas. I have afterwards observed the same man get close to a brother *proser*, and the two snails have travelled on so comfortably in their own slime, that they seemed to feel no more expression of envy or pleasure from what they had heard, than a real snail may be supposed to do at the active bounds and leaps of a stag, or of a high-mettled racer."—*Vol. i. page 384.*

French Taste in the Arts.

Lord Orford, in his very amusing "*Anecdotes of the Arts*,"* to use a fashionable phrase, *quizzes* the taste of the French in painting and sculpture. Speaking of Watteau's pastoral landscapes, he says the shepherds and shepherdesses look like

* Vol. iv. .

ladies and gentlemen from Versailles, and that even their sheep have a *coquettish* air. He relates a ludicrous anecdote of their taste in sculpture. "On the piers of a garden not far from Paris, I observed two *coquette* sphinxes. These lady-monsters had straw hats, gracefully smart, on one side of their heads, and silken cloaks half veiling their necks, all executed in stone."

Lord Monboddo.

To be blind to our own faults, yet to be lynx-eyed to those of others, is not more common in moral than in literary censures. What reader is not disgusted and astonished to hear my Lord Monboddo utter his severe censure on the style of Tacitus the historian, in a collocation of terms which would subject the style of the critic to the most contemptuous invective. He calls the composition of Tacitus "the short and priggish cut of style, so much in use now."—*Orig. and Prog. of Lang.* 3 vols.

Swift's Tale of the Tub well described.

"Had this writing been published in a pagan or popish nation, who are justly impatient of all

* This is teaching by example.

indignity offered to the established religion of their country, no doubt but the author would have received the punishment he deserved. But the fate of this *impious buffoon* is very different; for in a Protestant kingdom, zealous of their civil and religious immunities, he has not only escaped affronts, and the effects of public resentment, but he has been caressed and patronized by persons of great figure, and of all denominations.”* To this severe but just censure, the Dean of St. Patrick’s could only retort by false wit and scurrility.

Definition and Description.

These terms, though often confounded in conversation, and even in writing, are yet very different. If a person should undertake to describe any thing, he gives it all the parts which properly belong to it; but if he define any thing, he gives it only those parts which exclusively belong to it, and mark its peculiar character. When Plato is said to have defined man to be a two-legged animal without feathers; Diogenes, who was a sturdy logician, laughed at the attempt, and brought into the room where Plato and his audience were, a cock stripped of its feathers, and exclaimed in derision, “See Plato’s man!”

* Blackmore’s *Essays*, 1717.

Dramatic Humour.

Congreve, in his letter to John Dennis, the great critic, says he despairs of answering his enquiry, "What is humour?" He not only is unwilling to *define* what humour is, but even to *describe* it. At length he ventures to say, "I take it to be a singular and unavoidable manner of doing and saying any thing, peculiar and natural to one man only, by which his speech and actions are distinguished from those of other men." He speaks more plainly, when he points out to his correspondent the character of *Morose*, in Ben Johnson, as a specimen of humour; and declares his opinion of Ben Johnson's plays as replete with humour. It is remarkable, that in his description of what characters are not humorous, he exempts all country clowns, *sailors*, tradesmen, jockeys, gamblers, &c., though his own *Sailor Ben*, in "Love for Love," seems, in common parlance, the most humorous of all his characters.

Congreve's Dramatic Genius.

A very acute and profound critic* has well described the comic powers of Congreve: "His

* *Lives of the Poets*, art. *Congreve*.

scenes exhibit not much of humour, imagery, or passion. His personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators; every sentence is to ward or strike; the contest of smartness is never intermitted; his wit is a meteor, playing to and fro with alternate corruscations." Congreve, in the before-mentioned letter to Dennis, speaking of humour in female characters of the stage, says, "I must confess I have never made any observations of what I apprehend to be true humour in women; for if any thing does seem comical or ridiculous in a woman, I think it is little more than an acquired folly, or an affectation."

Humour continued.

It is to be observed, that when an author is himself an humorist, as was Swift in England, and Fontaine in France, they may be considered as drawing their sources of humour from themselves, and so writing in character. Dr. Arbuthnot and Mr. Addison were men of grave deportment and regulated minds, so that their humour, excellent as it was, claimed the superiority of being original, and the offspring of their own imaginations, and totally independent of any wrong bias in their own moral or intellectual characters and conduct.

Metaphorical or Figurative Language.

It is observable, that writers who possess and bring little matter to the subject on which they wish to display their talents, are very fond of dressing it in figurative language. Such a practice dazzles and confounds; yet words are the money of fools, and the counters of wise men. A splendid dress will set off an indifferent person, and give to a mean character an air of consequence. Good writers, replete with learning and sense, and conscious of their powers of information and perspicuity, use these figures of speech very sparingly, if at all—

As men of fortune venture to go plain.

Dr Young's Universal Passion.

Rules for Sonnets, Elegies, and Epitaphs.

That most judicious of all ancient critics, Quintilian, has spoken with much acuteness and propriety of lugubrious compositions: “Nunquam debet esse miseratio longa; nam cum veros dolores mitiget tempus, citius evanescat, necesse est, illa quam dicendo effinximus imago, nec speremus fore ut aliena mala quisquam diu ploret.”—*Lib. 6.* “Pity or the pathetic should not be prolix; for as time causes real grief to vanish, so the image of

it in our descriptions must still sooner disappear. We cannot expect that any one can long deplore the sorrows of another." This last observation contains an indisputable truth, conveyed in a vein of satirical humour, and reminds the reader of a saying of the knowing writer of *Gulliver's Travels*, when he addresses those around him on his bed of sickness :

Ye formal weepers for the sick,
In your last offices be quick,
And spare my absent friends the grief
To hear, yet give me no relief.
Expired to-day, entombed to-morrow,
When known, will save a double sorrow.

*Cicero's and Lord Chesterfield's Letters to
their Sons.*

Both these works contain precepts to instruct a young man in the duties and practices of life ; and both are written to the sons of their respective writers. Cicero's advice on all occasions is full of noble sentiment against vicious indulgences of all kinds, and the most manly exhortations to cultivate those virtues which tend to render a man an example of probity, honour, and true patriotism. On the contrary, my Lord Chesterfield's Letters palliate, if they do not recommend, every sensual

pleasure; and the whole body of letters is a system of selfish depravity. Posterity will hardly believe that one writer was a heathen philosopher, and the other a christian nobleman, famed for his talents in a very brilliant æra of English literature.

Theocritus.

In his Pastorals, Pope has made an alteration, much for the better, of an image in the Greek. Theocritus* introduces a lover wishing to be turned into a bee, and to buz about the chaplet which surrounded the head of his mistress; a wish surely not very attentive to the tranquillity of the lady, however it might have been gratifying to the lover. Pope has introduced a more pleasing guest into the arbour of his mistress:

Oh! were I made, by some transporting power,
The captive bird that sings within thy bow'r,
Then might my voice thy list'ning ears employ,
And I those kisses he receives enjoy.

Pastoral ii. l. 45.

I am sorry to disagree with the ingenious and amiable Author of the Essay on Pope, &c. where the wish in Theocritus is praised for its "tenderness and elegance," and preferred to the passage

* Idyll iii. l. 12.

in our Pope's Pastoral. "Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas," must be my excuse.

A Vulgar Error.

There prevails in the world a miserable *canon* with regard to the poet, viz. that he is born so, and does not become one by art and study. A poet* has said so, and succeeding poets have not been unwilling to render the wreath of poesy sacred to mystery and jargon. Let us break into this conjurer's circle, and tell him a plain unvarnished tale. A man whose mind is turned to poetry must, and often does, cultivate this faculty, with every method in his power, as he would (with due encouragement) any other art to which his turn of mind inclined him. Poetry, like every plant, must be well nurtured, or it will not be better than a weed; and though thriving indeed, but weak, and of a bad colour and odour!

An Elegant Compliment.

M. Menage relates, that he told his servant one morning to deny him to all visitors, as he was engaged in his study. "M. Carpentier called on

* Homer in his *Odyssey*.

me," says Menage, "and he was, according to order, refused admission; but hearing his voice I ran after him, and bringing him back I said, My dear friend, I did not mean to exclude you, for a man of letters can never interrupt a man of letters." --*Menagiana*.

Orators

Seem to resemble poets in one striking circumstance, viz. their power of influencing our minds without the aid of reason, and perhaps better without it. Gibbon, the historian and orator, depends more on his faculty of talking than arguing. M. Buffon, the great animal historian, covers his dubious facts, and his more dubious inferences, with the splendor of his oratory: and Voltaire, by his wit, (a kind of short-hand oratory,) shews that a very easy and beaten path opens to persuasion, which lies very far apart from reason, and has often joined his brother bard in the utterance of some rational queries.

How shall my debts be paid, or can my scores
Be cleared with verses to my creditors.
Hexameter's no sterling, and, I fear,
What the brain coins is scarcely current there.
Can metre cancel bonds? is there a time
Ever to hope to wipe out chalk with rhyme?
Or if I now were hurrying to a gaol,
Are the Nine Muses held sufficient bail?

Randolph's Poems, 1638.

Note. This merry bard, who was the author of a dramatic piece, "The Muses' Looking-Glass," died young, after a life of intemperance, and negligence, and want.—*Chalmers's Biog. Dict.*

Laurence Sterne.

The reader of the *Sentimental Journey* by this author, if he has either sense or delicacy, must be very sorry that a man capable of writing with such true pathos, should have condescended to vitiate his claim to elegance and pure sentiment by any obscenity. "Exemplum vitiis imitabile decipit," says a writer* of very excellent taste; yet Sterne, who seems to have read Rabelais *con amore*, had not virtue or good feeling enough to avoid an imitation of his favourite author, in a work where the reader could least expect such an impropriety, not less hostile to the writer's taste than his morals. If, as Pope very justly observes,

Immodest words admit of no defence,
As want of decency is want of sense;

a still stronger objection lies against an author who endeavours, under the guise of raising your best affections and sentiments, to seduce you by vicious representation: it is transplanting, by a legerdmain trick, the statue of Priapus to the pedestal of an Apollo, or the celestial Venus.

* Horace.

Four in Hand.

Though this volunteering system of men of fortune, in driving their own carriages of various denominations, may seem a *new* method of gaining some elevation above their fellows, yet Horace, in his first ode, seems to have alluded to it with a prophetic eye of taste :

Sunt quos CURRICULO pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat, metaque fervidis
Evitata rotis, palmaque nobilis,
Terrarum dominos evexit ad Deos. *Ode 1.*

The editor has ventured to translate, or rather imitate, the above passage, for the sake of country gentlemen, who may have lost their Latin amidst more active employments than their libraries could have supplied them with, or their inclinations, perhaps, suggested to them :

Lo ! some to curricles repair,
And take the dust as well as air.
The skilful *coachee* makes his boast
Closely to pass, yet miss, the post ;
And on their boxes plac'd so high,
These *landlords* seem to reach the sky.

Chaucer vindicated.

“ From the accidental circumstance of Dryden and Pope's having copied the gay and ludicrous parts of Chaucer, the common notion seems to

have arisen that Chaucer's vein of poetry was chiefly turned to the light and ridiculous. In a word, they who look into Chaucer will soon be convinced of this prevailing prejudice, and will find his *comic* vein to be only like one of Mercury, imperceptibly mingled with a mine of *gold*."—*Warton's Essay on Pope, &c.* vol. ii. p. 70.

Envy in Authors.

We can easily excuse a poor poet, who writes for his subsistence, shewing some degree of envy and jealousy at the success of a rival bard; but lament this failing in a man of true genius. "Old Jacob Tonson used to say, that Dryden was a little jealous of rivals. He would compliment Crown, when a play of his failed; but was very cold to him, if it met with success. He sometimes used to say, that Crown had some genius; but then he added always that his father and Crown's mother were well acquainted." Mr. Pope to Mr. Spense.—*Dr. Warton's Essay on the Genius, &c. of Pope,* vol. ii. p. 310, note.

Example and Precept.

How many things obtain consequence by being placed in comparison. Thus, when precept is said to be inferior to example, the latter gains a seem-

ing eminence ; yet alas, how little do either prevail, especially in politics. I could mention a nation, where some great men and nobles have been taught very little prudence of conduct from the sad examples given them by a neighbouring nation on a late sad Revolution !! Till men act by reason, and not by passion, precept and example will be equally ineffectual, by being equally misapplied and neglected.

Learned Languages.

The "veil of a learned language," to use a term of Gibbon, is very useful to some writers, especially commentators, whose sense is often disputable in their interpretation of an author's meaning, though their Latin may be very erudite in idiom. Let the reader consult an English translation of Dr. Bentley's Dedication to Lord Halifax, of his Horace, and also of the notes on that author by the same most learned Doctor. The translation seems intended to expose the poverty of sentiment concealed in the pompous verbosity of the original Latin of the commentator.—*Odes in English of Horace, 12mo.*

Tragedies and Comedies.

It seems a matter of wonder, at the first consideration of the subject, that tragedies should be

preferred by strolling actors and their audiences to comedies. Yet we must recollect, that the language of passion is known to all minds, whilst the fashions and the foibles, of which comedies are composed, are variable and short-lived, and perhaps only known to those persons who live in what is called the "*beau monde*." Wit and folly are often local, but passion is universal.

Plato's Dialogues.

Though there are many passages in this author which are very sublime, yet there are also many trifling arguments and disputations; so that Warton* is well justified in speaking of Plato's countrymen, when he says that they were fond "of declamatory disputation, which they frequently practised under an earnest pretence of discovering the truth, but in reality to indulge their native disposition to debate, &c. Some of Plato's dialogues," adds the learned and ingenious critic, "*professing* a profundity of speculation, have much of this talkative humour."—*Warton's History of Poetry.*

Advice.

The frequent failure of this salutary medicine in the disorders of life may be ascribed to the

* *History of English Poetry*, Part I, vol. iii. p. 450.

different ages of the doctor and his patient. Advice is generally given from the older person to the younger, and of course on subjects which each party views with very different optics. A man who stands on higher ground than another must see further ; so fares it with the adviser, whom long experience has elevated beyond the contracted view of early life. Spenser the poet speaks earnestly on this subject :

Let me entreat
For to enfold the language of your heart.
Mishaps are master'd by advice discreet ;
And counsel magistrates the greatest smart ;
Found never help who never would his hurts impart.
Spenser's Fairy Queen.

Hints to Licentious Poets.

Classical mythology has afforded the moderns an useful instruction, by the dedication of the Muses to a state of virginity ; and the first poems of antiquity were sung in the Temple of the Gods. But times degenerated, and the harp of Apollo was quartered with the quiver of Cupid. A Greek epigram, said to be written by Plato, in the true style of a moral philosopher, is no mean caution to erotic bards, not to write out of pure idleness. Venus addresses the Muses :

Ye Nymphs, to Venus be due honours paid,
 Or Love on you his potent darts shall try.
 Hence with your threats, the smiling Muses said,
 The idle boy we *studious* maids defy.

Vanity.

“He knows little of vanity,” says an eminent writer, “who does not know that it is omnivorous; that it has no choice in its food; that it is fond to talk even of its own faults and vices, as what will excite surprise and draw attention, and what will pass at worst for openness and candour. It was this abuse and perversion which vanity makes even of hypocrisy, which has driven J. Rousseau to record a life not so much as chequered or spotted here and there with virtues, or even distinguished by a single good action.”—*Maxims, Opinions, &c. of the late Edm. Burke, esq; v. 2, 1815.*

*From the same, on the Writings and Designs
 of Rousseau.*

“Mr. Hume told me, that he had from Rousseau himself the secret of his principles of composition. That acute and eccentric observer had perceived, that, to strike and interest the public, the *marvellous* must be produced; that the *marvellous* of the heathen mythology had long lost its effect; that giants, magicians, fairies, and heroes of romance

which succeeded, had exhausted the portion of credulity which belonged to their age; that now nothing was left to a writer but that species of the marvellous which yet might be produced, and with as great an effect as ever, though in another way, that is, the marvellous in life, in manners, in characters, and in extraordinary situations, giving rise to new and unlooked-for strokes in politics and morals."

Gray the Poet.

We are surprised that so accurate a scholar and sublime a poet, as Gray must be esteemed by all the lovers of poetry, should write two such couplets as follow :

Gay Hope is theirs, by Fancy fed,
Less pleasing when possess'd.

This elliptical expression exceeds poetic licence ; the *object* of hope is less pleasing when possessed, no doubt; but can it be said so of hope itself?

Again,

This the force of Erin *hiding*,
Side by side as proudly *riding*.
Triumphs of Owen.

That a man of genius, as Gray was, should describe a ship as *hiding* instead of containing her *troops*, is wonderful, except he wanted a rhyme.

A Singular Critique.

The late Gilbert Wakefield, critic and politician, has made the following *panegyric* on Mr. P. Knight's poem, "The Landscape:" "A poem which the elegant and ingenious author, by a few lectures on versification, relative to modes of expression too undignified for poetry, and from a languishing imbecility of numbers, would soon polish into greater excellence."—*Wakefield's Notes on Pope, epist. iv. page 321.* To send a gentleman mature in age to learn his prosody and his poetic phraseology, and to improve the vigour of his numbers, seems one of the day-dreams of that learned, ingenious, and very eccentric writer.

Biography and History well distinguished.

Dryden, whether he treated his subject in verse or prose, loved to sport in the regions of a lively and picturesque fancy. Speaking of history, he says, "*There* you are conducted only into the rooms of state ; *here* (in biography) you are led into the private lodgings of the hero.* You see him in his undress, and are made familiar

* The reader will here recollect an acute and well-known saying, that "no man is a hero to his *valet de chambre*."

with his most private actions and conversations. You may behold Scipio and Lælius gathering cockle-shells on the shore, Augustus playing at bounding stones with boys, and Agesilaus riding on a hobby-horse among his children."—*Life of Plutarch.* See Malone's edition of *Dryden's Prose Works*, vol. iii. 8vo.

Translators.

Dryden was always at the head of these second-hand poets; and the superior genius, which shone forth in an epic poem, did not forsake him in the translation even of an epigram.

Cheronean Plutarch, to thy deathless praise
Does martial Rome this grateful statue raise;
Because both Greece and she thy fame have shar'd,
(Their heroes written, and their lives compar'd.)
But thou thyself couldst never write thy own,
Their lives have parallels, but thine has none.
*From the Greek of Agathias, and supposed to have been
inscribed on a statue of Plutarch at Rome.*

Crowded Tables.

In large "parties," as they are called, little of society is to be enjoyed. Your next neighbour in such a crowd must prove your entertainer or your tormentor. Plutarch, in his *Symposiacs*, has a very singular and amusing passage relative

to this subject. "The rule I would follow is, to fit the persons, who sit near each other, in such a manner, as the wants of each may be supplied. Next to one who is willing to instruct, I would place one that is desirous of instruction; next a morose guest, I would seat a good-tempered one; next a talkative old man, a patient youth; next a boaster, a man of jest and jeering."

*Why Young Men love Tragedies, and Men
advanced in Life prefer Comedies.*

This question is very forcibly and philosophically resolved by an excellent French critic: "A man at thirty will prefer the tragedies of Racine to the comedies of Moliere, because his passions are still directing him to relish their representations, so well imitated by that tragedian. On the contrary, a man at sixty will prefer the comedies of Moliere, because they bring to his recollection many scenes which he has passed through with observation on them, or perhaps been himself an actor in many, which the excellent comedian has copied so happily."—*Reflexions Critiques, par l'Abbé du Bos, vol. i. section 49.*

An important Mistake in Terms.

In the valuable volume, "The Chemical Catechism," by Samuel Parkes, the writer apologises for his frequent introduction of *moral reflections*. Quoting Archdeacon Paley, "Every one has a particular train of thought into which his mind falls, when at leisure from the impressions and ideas that occasionally excite it; and if one train of thinking be more desirable than another, it is surely that which regards the phenomena of nature, with a constant reference to a supreme, intelligent Author." By this quotation the writer evidently substituted, in haste, *moral* instead of *religious* reflections.

Hypocrisy.

When the hero of Butler is under the fear of being killed by the witches, which were set upon him by the widow in her house, he answers without equivocation to the questions they put to him. One of them says,

Why didst thou choose that cursed sin,
Hypocrisy, to set up in?

Hudibras answers very plainly,

Because it is the thrivingest calling,
The only saints'-bell that rings all in ;

In which all churches are concern'd,
 And is the easiest to be learn'd;
 For no degrees, unless th' employ it,
 Can ever gain much, or enjoy it.
 A gift that is not only able
 To domineer among the rabble;
 But by the laws empow'r'd to rout
 And awe the greatest that stand out;
 Which few hold forth against, for fear
 Their hands should slip, and come too near;
 For no sin else, among the saints,
 Is taught so tenderly against.

Hudibras, part iii. canto 1, l. 123.

Origin of Language.

The communication of ideas between human beings by words, or certain conventional sounds, though subject to abuse, is yet a most noble and wonderful privilege. The late Dr. Samuel Johnson, not less famous for the warmth of his piety than the sagacity of his intellect, used to say, that he thought that language was one of the great proofs of a Deity presiding over human affairs; "for this extraordinary benefit could not have been devised, and carried forth so far towards perfection, by the powers of mere mortal intellects."

Sublime Answer of an Hermit.

I once, says a Traveller in Italy, was wandering in a most romantic and solitary part of the

country, and arrived at the residence of an hermit, in the very bosom of this deep solitude. In conversation with this pious man, I ventured to ask him how he could like to live on the top of a mountain, and above a mile from any human habitation. " Providence," replied the hermit, " is my very next-door neighbour."—*Sterne's Koran.*

Civilization.

When the erudite Monboddo, and the eloquent and fanciful J. J. Rousseau, attempted to plead in favour of barbarous nations as most virtuous and happy, they exhibited more ignorance of historical facts, than sense or wit in their declamations. The histories of remote and uncivilized periods, in all countries, oppose their absurd theories. See this matter treated with much perspicuity in Warton's History of English Poetry, and in M. D'Alembert's interesting treatise on the " Commerce between Scholars and the Great."

Men of extra Intellects.

The modest and wary enquiries of persons of real genius should be a lesson of caution to men of less intellectual powers. Sir Isaac Newton steered clear in all his writings of the dangerous study of

metaphysics; and the illustrious John Locke, with a genius naturally sound and precise, pointed out to mankind the errors to which the human intellect was subject, from the use of abstract terms, and from the abuse of words, incident to the imperfections of language.

M. Descartes.

Aristotle is reported to have said, that the beginning of wisdom is to doubt. This assertion may be doubtful, though Descartes thought otherwise. "Cogito, ergo sum;" I think, therefore I am. Having doubted his existence in the first place, he wishes to prove it by a logical form of speech. Now that a man should doubt a thing, of which he asserts and admits as a faculty or attribute, seems strange, if we did not know, that in metaphysical studies the most ingenious man can only exhibit its difficulties most fully; and to use a line, somewhat out of its direction, indeed, they are such difficulties, that

He best can paint them, who has felt them most.

Pope's Eloisa to Abelard.

What Studies to be pursued.

Medical men agree, that whatever meats we have most attachment to, will best agree with the

stomach, and of course with the digestion. This seems, by an obvious analogy, to be applicable to our intellectual love of particular authors. If inclination calls upon us, the writers we peruse agree with our intellectual stomachs and digestion; and the memory, which is the best proof that we have well digested our mental food, will retain that deposit, which it otherwise would have refused. Where a man's professional studies agree with his taste, he must be, with very common talents, certainly useful, and probably eminent, in his vocation.

Addison, as a Critic,

Was an elegant classic scholar. He was (and for that reason, perhaps) too much under the "bondage of classic authority;" and his critical papers, in the *Spectator*, on Milton's "*Paradise Lost*," are too general in their praises to be very edifying. *Mr. T. Warton, a more learned critic than Addison, ventures to say, that when the latter writer commended the description of "*Laughter*," in *L'Allegro*, he, no doubt, thought it the finest passage in both poems; and that it did not "coincide with Addison's subordinate ideas of poetry to exhibit passages of a more poetical character."

* Hist. of Poetry.

Petrarch's Sonnets.

In the revival of letters it became the fashion to consider many writings allegorical, which seem not so intended by the authors. The Sonnets of Petrarch have been edited with a perpetual commentary, to prove that they were written on sacred subjects. Indeed, the refined and metaphysical thoughts in these love sonnets would easily admit of such a metamorphosis, and be readily turned aside from any profane meaning, or perhaps from any meaning at all, save what is unjustly called Platonic love. The acute and luminous historian of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire calls Petrarch's love for Laura a metaphysical passion for a nymph so shadowy, that her existence has been questioned.

Gilbert Wakefield.

A most singular instance of the dexterity of self-love, in apologizing for the imperfections of the writer's mind, is to be seen in his own account. "A strange *fastidiousness*, for which I could never account, and which has been a great hindrance to my improvement through my whole life, took a bewildering possession of my faculties.

This impediment commonly recurred in the *spring* of the year, when I was enamoured of rambling in the open air, through solitary fields, or by a river's side, of cricket, and of fishing, that no self-expostulation, no prospect of future vexation, nor even emulation itself, could chain me to my books. Sometimes, for a month together, and even for a longer period, I have been disabled from reading a single page,"* &c. A matter-of-fact man would call this a fit of idleness, rather than of *fastidiousness*; though such relaxation was doubtless of use, and even necessary, to one of such generally sedentary habits, and might, without injury to any man's character, be called by the right name.

Metaphysics.

The mind endeavouring to investigate the mind is a singular phenomenon in science : measuring a thing by itself would not be less so in physics. My Lord Bacon, in one of his essays, has admirably stated this absurdity in metaphysical studies: "The wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby ; if it work upon itself, as the spider

* See A. Chalmers's Biograph. Dic. &c.

worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth, indeed, cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit." Milton has made metaphysics the idle sport of the fallen angels :

Others apart, sate on a hill retir'd,
In thoughts more elevate ; and reason'd high
Of Providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate—
Vain wisdom all, and vain philosophy.

Paradise Lost, book 2.

Telemachus (of Bishop Fenelon)

Is a most beautiful book ; pleasing and instructive in its morals ; sound in its politics and religion. The description of the old and patriotic King of Tarentum is a very masterly-drawn picture ; and his virtues are their own rewards, viz. the love of his subjects, and his own cheerfulness and peace of mind. The style is very elegant, the rural scenery very delightful and picturesque. The character and description of the priest of Apollo is designed in the finest traits of a christian minister. The whole composition is perfumed with the " odour of sanctity."

Ariosto, Tasso, and Dante.

The dispute concerning the different merits of these Italian poets may be laid at rest by ascribing

to each his due merits. As a regular poem, according to the acknowledged rules of the critics, Tasso is superior; and must also bear the bell, as to workmanship. Ariosto, on the contrary, has many passages very superior to any in Tasso; but they are ill arranged; and the fable of his poem is not sufficiently agreeable to the Aristotelian taste. The scholars of Italy admire Tasso, and love Ariosto. Dante is too gloomy for any reader but who is, or wishes to be, a monk of the Monastery of La Trappe.

Men of mere Memory.

This is a faculty, which, when attached to a feeble mind, may prove hurtful, or of little use. A young person who has been praised for his strength of memory, is very apt to content himself with his powers of quoting the product of other intellects, rather than labour in the cultivation of his own. From this circumstance arise many babblers and few philosophers. A man of genius may be possessed of little force of memory, he therefore cultivates his own mind like a skilful gardener, who knows if he cherishes the root, the branches and flowers will sprout and flourish of themselves. Ask a mere man of memory on what principle

such a position may be fixed, and the babbler is silenced; he knows that his recollection of detail constitutes all his talk; and the parrot would as soon be able to converse, as the babbler to reason; so well sings our poet of reason:

The coxcomb bird, so talkative and grave,
That from his cage cries cuckold, whore, and knave,
Tho' many a passenger he rightly call,
You hold him no *philosopher* at all.

Pope's Moral Essays, epist. 1, line 5.

Arguments.

Many persons unaccustomed to the restraints of more polished society are always ready to resist the sentiments of the last speaker by opposition, or what they choose to call arguments. Let the subject be what it will, interesting or not to either party, these gentlemen are ever ready to "play a fit of argument." When it happens among young lawyers, the reason of this practice is obvious, as it sharpens their wit, and strengthens their nerves for the Courts of Law; but it may be a matter of surprise, why a man without any fee or reward should raise the anger of a dull neighbour, by proving to him that his positions are absurd, and his expressions confused, and his sentiments altogether untenable. Silence in such company would

sink nonsense in oblivion, and the peace of society be freed from this gratuitous pleader and demonstrator.

On either hand he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute ;
He'd undertake to prove, by force
Of argument, a man's no horse.

Hudibras, canto 1.

Samuel Butler.

The history of this inimitable bard, whose witty genius the heavy weight of politics could not discourage or depress, fills the reader's mind with melancholy reflections. Charles the Second, to whose father "Hudibras" was so useful, in making the cause of his enemies ridiculous, continually quoted, and taught his courtiers to repeat, his favourite passages ; yet never patronized the author. We feel more for Butler, than if he had uttered the severest and the justest complaints ; and we read, with admiration of the man, the following couplets, allusive to himself and his feelings, as a true subject :

For loyalty is still the same,
Whether it win or lose the game ;
True as the dial to the sun,
Although it be not shone upon.

Nouvelle Heloise, &c.

J. J. Rousseau, like other madmen, had many lucid intervals and many ingenious devices. As a literary man, he knew that *romances* had had their day, and could attract no more, though the love of the marvellous was as much alive as ever. He then drew characters, and described moral events, and founded sentiments, as much out of the way of nature and common sense as he could. His pencil was bold, his imagination warm, his colouring brilliant; and his pictures attracted all those who exercise their fancy more than their reason, and their morality not at all. With the cunning of a madman, he knew that what was new and striking would be attractive to many readers, so he exhibits himself in his confessions a vile compound of lewdness, roguery, cowardice, and ingratitude. Most of his heroines are fitted for a brothel, and his heroes would shine in the Newgate Calendar.

Extra Boswellism, and a singular Comparison.

Such was the strong prejudice and reverence which Pope entertained for the extraordinary abilities of Lord Bolingbroke, that he used to speak of him as of a superior being; and at the

appearance of the comet, he told his friends that "it was sent to convey Lord Bolingbroke home again," just as a stage-coach stops at your door to take up a passenger.—*Essay on the Gen. and Writ. of Pope*, v. ii. p. 178.

A Happy Analogy.

Hume, speaking of the obscene and disgusting poems of Lord Rochester, and allowing him vigour of thought and energy of diction, compares his liberty of speech to that of the ancient satirists. "Yet," says the ingenious author, "their freedom no more resembles the license of Rochester, than the nakedness of an Indian does that of a common prostitute."—*Hist. of Eng.* v. ii. p. 234.

Pictures and Epitaphs in Churches.

The reader, whether a Papist or Protestant, will agree with the taste and good sense displayed in the following passage from one of Pope's letters: "I know you will join me (who have been making an altar-piece) that the zeal of the first reformers was ill placed in removing *pictures* (that is to say, *examples*) out of churches, and yet suffering epitaphs (that is to say, flatteries and false history) to be a burden to church walls, and the shame, as well as the derision, of all honest men."—*Pope's works, Letter to Allen*, v. ix. let. 89.

Knights.

Who would not suppose that the following strictures on some persons who are so ambitious of these titles, had been the production of some *modern* author? "Mean fellows there are, who break their winds in straining to appear knights; and topping knights there are, who, one would think, die with desire to be thought mean men. The former raise themselves by their ambition, or by their virtues; the latter debase themselves by their weakness and their vices; and one had need of a good discernment to distinguish between these two kinds of knights, so near in their names, and so distant in their actions."—*Don Quixote*, v. iii. p. 60.

Portable Property.

The following testimony in favour of learning is well, though quaintly, expressed. "This patrimony of liberal education you have been pleased to endow me withal, I now carry with me abroad as a sure inseparable treasure, nor do I feel it any burden or incumbrance to me at all; and what danger soever my person or other things I have about me do incur, yet I do not fear the losing of this, either by shipwrecks or pirates at sea, or by robbers, or by fire, or any other casualty, on shore; and at my return to England, I hope, or at least-

wise I shall do my endeavour, that you may find this patrimony improved somewhat to your comfort."—*To my Father, upon my first going beyond Sea. Howel's Familiar Letters, l. ii.*

Monasteries.

Those who are very violent in their censures of *religious* houses (for such many of them really were) would do well to consider the consequences which soon followed on their destruction, viz. the code of Poor Laws and Rates in Queen Elizabeth's time, when once voluntary charities became compulsory. Selden says very justly and wittily, "When the abbies were pulled down in Queen Elizabeth's time, and all good works defaced, the preachers must cry up justification by *faith*, and not by good works."—*Table Talk*. The Poor Laws often damp private charities.

Charity ever
Finds in the act reward, and needs no trumpet
In the receiver, &c. *Beaumont and Fletcher.*

Potter and Cumberland.

Potter, in his translation of *Æschylus*, and Cumberland, in translating the passages out of the Greek comedies, have shewn great taste and judgment. Potter, by adopting the phrases from Milton and Gray, and Cumberland, by borrowing the lan-

guage of old English plays of reputation, have given their translations the ease and force of originals. The reader is placed at home among combinations of words to which he has been accustomed, and feels no embarrassment from new combinations of phraseology, the "coinage of the translator's brains;" who, perhaps, is more acquainted with the Greek language than with his own.

Hypercriticism.

Plutarch, in his life of Alexander, ridicules an affected passage in Hegesias, who had said, "that when the Temple of Diana at Ephesus was on fire, the goddess was employed at the birth of Alexander, and so could not assist to put out the flames." Plutarch adds, "the coldness of this expression is such, that it seems sufficient to have extinguished the fire of the temple." Dr. Smith, the translator of Longinus, commends Dr. Pearce's censure of Plutarch. "Dulness, says the hypercritic, "is somewhat infectious, for while Plutarch is censuring Hegesias, he falls into his very character." True, if Plutarch was in earnest; but is it not more candid to suppose that Plutarch meant to joke upon Hegesias by mimicking his style?

Critics, indeed, are valuable men,
But hypercritics are as good again.

Brampton's Epist. on Taste.

Low Company; its evils.

Lord Clarendon, the great historian, has observed, "That he never knew one man (of what condition soever) arrive at any degree of reputation in the world, who made choice of, or delighted in, the company or conversation of those who in their qualities were inferior, or in their parts not much superior, to himself." Goldsmith has well illustrated this sentiment in his excellent comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, where Tony Lumpkin, a man of good birth, and heir to a considerable fortune, is represented as being delighted with the company of his inferiors, and by his conduct as totally unworthy of his race and condition,—

One who wore

His heart upon his sleeve, for crows to peck at.

Shakespeare.

Commentators and Antiquaries.

These gentlemen, from the nature of their employments, look backwards, and have little concern with the present generation; or their customs and manners are very often rough and unpolished to those who differ from them in their dark surmises. Speaking of one species of these

scholars, says a shrewd and sagacious writer,*
 “ Like other pedants, they are fierce and stern; for
 there are many analogies between men and other
 animals, and none stronger than this, that they get
 fierce by being kept in the dark.”

Dangers of common Compliments.

At our entrance into a friend's house we are
 greeted with “ Pray make yourself quite at home.”
 Should a dull or an impudent man take this invi-
 tation *au pied de lettre*, he would make his visits
 very uncomfortable to both parties. Every man
 in his own house has rules that respect the hours
 of sleeping, eating, &c.: these, if disturbed by
 the guest, would be great inconveniency to his
 friend. The best rule for a visiter seems to be
 to act according to the old saying, “ When you
 are in Rome, do as they do in Rome:” let the
 visiter conform to the doings of the house in which
 he resides, and leave his own habits behind him.

Education: an anecdote.

Amidst the long and desultory treatises on this
 important subject, the following short system
 of education may be recommended, both for its
 force and brevity. Lord —, observing his
 neighbour Dr. —'s daughters very modest and

* Pilkington's pref. to his *Study of Medals*, London, 1784.

correct in all their manners, complimented the Doctor on his plan of education. "You have, no doubt, my dear Doctor, well considered this subject; I should like to hear your system of discipline." 'My Lord,' replied the Doctor, 'it is a very short one: I have brought up my daughters in the fear of God and a broomstick.'

Metaphors.

"But the greatest art (in poetry) is the forming of metaphors happily; for that alone cannot be acquired from others, but is itself a proof of uncommon genius, since to form metaphors well is to observe *the similitude of things*," says an eminent critic.* This passage is nobly illustrated and verified by our great bard; for how superior is Shakespeare in his metaphors to all his contemporaries,—Beaumont and Fletcher, James Shirley, and P. Massinger. Aristotle has well pointed out the reason, and we may justly apply it to our bard, who was a most accurate observer of similitudes in art as well as in nature.

The Poetry of Mr. Hayley and Lord Byron.

On the poetry of Mr. H. being mentioned to an eminent scholar and critic† as "flat, stale,

* Aristotle's Poetics, c. 22.

† The late Author of English Poetry.

and unprofitable," and the observer comparing it to capillaire and water, 'Yes,' says the critic, 'it wants brandy, Sir, it wants brandy.' Had that excellent and candid critic lived to have read Lord Byron's hot and fiery poems, he might have exclaimed, 'Why, Sir, here is all sheer home-made brandy, mixed with gunpowder; whilst the bard sports with his crackers and squibs, and mounts in the air like Sky-Rocket Jack.'—*N.B.* A sailor, who being flung on high by the ship's explosion, escaped with life.

Wigs.

Perhaps there is not a greater proof of the doctrine of association of ideas than that part of our dress called a wig. Having been used to see it on the judge's, the doctor's, and the divine's head, as a type of dignity, we continue to venerate this extraordinary effort of art to make what is strange in itself to become venerable. Before this prejudice in favour of wigs, the first of its family was placed on the head, by way of ridicule, of one Saxton, a fool to Henry VIII. "In an account of the treasurer of the chambers in that king's reign there is entered, 'paid for Saxton's, the king's fool's, wig, 20s.'"—*Anecdotes of Painters in the reign of Henry VIII. v. i. p. 135.*

Shenstone.

It seems singular that this poet (whose whole life was a romance) should presume to think slightly of Spencer's great work the *Fairy Queen*. "When I bought him first, I read a page or two of the *Fairy Queen*, and cared not to proceed. After that, Pope's *Parodies* made me consider him ludicrously, and in that light I think he may be read with pleasure." How would poor Shenstone have whined and hung his head, had he known that any of his readers have declared that they read him with most pleasure in a ludicrous light? Yet so it is, his *Schoolmistress* being esteemed his best poem.—See *Shenstone's Letters*.

Retort Valiant.

It is very observable in the world how many persons are envious of those acquirements of others, which they do not possess themselves, and cannot conceal their feelings, though they are ashamed of them. Mr. B. an able mathematician, said peevishly to his friend D., an eminently classical scholar, "Come, D. let us have none of your Greek." 'Why,' replied Mr. D. coolly, should you trouble yourself with this request, for should I quote any Greek passage, you would not know it to be so?"

Geology.

The bold enquiries into this science, though in its state of infancy, and the hardy theories brought forward, seem calculated to

“ Make the unlearned stare, the learned smile ;”

and induce the serious and diligent peruser of these extraordinary tracts to recollect the lines of the facetious author of *Hudibras* on some geological author of his time :

As he profess'd,
He had “ first matter” seen undress'd ;
He took her naked, all alone,
Before one rag of form was on ;
The Chaos, too, he had descried,
And seen quite thro', or else he lied.

Cowley the Poet.

Had that excellent critic Dr. Johnson been acquainted with Spanish poetry, he would have added still greater splendour to his *Life of Cowley*. The “ *Barnasso Espagnol*” would have afforded him many specimens of the “ metaphysical” poetry, which Cowley was so much indebted to ; as he, like Milton, traversed all regions to collect his stores of erudition. It may appear singular, that Cowley, who in his prose works writes with so

much ease, and natural elegance, and dignity, should have adopted such models as Spanish poets. His ode called "The Garden," addressed to his friend, John Evelyn, esq; the author of "Sylva, or a Treatise on Forest Trees," should not be passed by. The seventh stanza is remarkable for a diffuse yet vigorous expansion of the passage in scripture, where the "lilies of the field" are said to exceed "Solomon in all his glory."

Etymology.

This uncertain study seems, unfortunately, a great favourite with minor scholars and everyday wits. Such persons, with much gravity, put forth their idle and dull conjectures on this very difficult department of learning. The etymologist should be a man of deep erudition and sagacity, and conversant especially with antiquarian researches. The fashion of language is very changeable. Voltaire says with a great deal of truth, as well as very facetiously, that etymologists make very little account of consonants, and none at all of vowels. Perhaps the faculty of punning adroitly would be no small attainment in these ambiguous "pursuits of literature."

Natural History mostly conjecture.

In this very pleasing department of science how little is really known of the animal world, except their external and internal conformations, and some few habits of animals, which minute and frequent attention have enabled the naturalist to make. Among creatures so different from himself, and devoid of any powers to understand their language, the naturalist is every moment travelling through a strange country, and hears and sees the natives, without any faculty to describe the motives of any one of their actions. To judge of them by his own intellect and passions (and how can we do otherwise?) is but a blind mode of proceeding, and puts the great M. Buffon upon the level of little Æsop.

Ancient and Modern Customs.

Cicero, in his "Orator," mentions a ludicrous story, very applicable to modern times. "Nasica came to the house of the poet Ennius, and when he asked for him, was told by the maid that her master was gone out. Nasica knew well that Ennius was 'at home,' but that he had given the maid orders to deny him. A few days after, when Ennius called at Nasica's house, and asked for

Nasica, Nasica at the gate told him he was not at home. 'What,' said Ennius, 'do I not know your own voice?' "Are you not an impudent fellow?" replied Nasica, "when your maid told me you was not at home, did not I believe her? Now you won't believe me, though I tell you so myself."—*Guthrie's Translation of the Orator, chap. 68.*

Character of Æneas.

Commentators on ancient authors are very apt to form their notions of the manners of antiquity by the times in which they themselves live. One of these ingenious persons has observed the great propriety in Virgil of giving Æneas the title of *Dux*, Captain, when he entered the cave with the unfortunate Dido, though on all other occasions he calls him *Pius*. Had this commentator lived in the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell, he would not have thought so; as a republican captain was, perhaps, as pious, and certainly as amorous, as any chaplain in the Protector's regiment.

Cicero's Sophism.

One is astonished that so great a man as Cicero should, in serious reasoning, fall into such a verbal

sophistry as he has, when in his "Old Age" he compares youth and age together. "I grant," says he, "that an old man has nothing to hope; but he has this *advantage* over youth, that what young men *wish for*, he has already *obtained*." Now youth *does not* wish to be arrived at old age, but to enjoy the intermediate years that lead to it. When old, he will not consider that he has *obtained* an advantage; but will find, in the language of a vulgar joke, that "he has gained a loss."

Marquis Bonasana Beccaria,

Born at Milan in 1735, died 1793.

The Marquis, in his Treatise on Crimes and Punishment, is sometimes, from his metaphysical turn of mind, obscure; but his thoughts on *suicide* and *duelling* seem worthy of consideration. Speaking of the public opinion being in favour of this private appeal to arms, he proposes that the challenger should be alone subject to punishment, and that the laws should be lenient to the man who accepts the challenge, because he acts under an opinion of honourable self-defence, against the evil influence of which the law cannot protect him.

Suicide.

The Marquis Beccaria treats this unhappy state of mind with great lenity and caution; and considers the punishment of the suicide, as it cannot be personal to him after death, therefore to be more properly assigned to God than man. To those who would punish the suicide by inflicting any penalty on his family as a means of preventing a man from slaying himself, his answer seems conclusive. "If a man prefers death to life, and considers it as a burden instead of a state of the most moderate enjoyment, the consideration of the future welfare of his family will not stop his murderous hand."

Rage for the "Nude."

I should advise the ladies, not as a moralist, but as one of their most sincere though frank admirers, to dress themselves more modestly. Imagination is more alive, and a more active agent in love, than the eye. Habit soon makes the pleasures of sight to grow weary and be disgusting; whilst the pleasures of imagination are never to be satiated. I do not doubt that a young Chinese beauty, who shews only the tip of her foot, would gain more admirers than all the ladies in an eastern seraglio dancing at an "undressed ball," or in their baths.

Translations and Imitations.

It was a happy thought of Cervantes, to compare translations of the ancient poets to the wrong side of tapestry. It may be said of imitations, which have more invention in them, though inferior to their originals, that they resemble Wilton carpets, yet do not rival the true Turkish manufactures, either in splendour of colours or durability of materials. Pope's Imitations of Horace are more pleasing to an English reader than any translations could be; and R. Lloyd's imitation of the "Gossips," in Theocritus, will often raise a laugh in the English reader, who would have found the fidelity of a translation to ancient manners dry and uninteresting.

Blockheads

Are not only very dull men, but are also very provoking companions. Mr. M—— says he has turned all the poets out of his study; I should rather suppose, on the contrary, that they had turned him out. This is the dexterity of self-love, to endeavour to prove that what a block-head does not or cannot relish, he immediately declares, with all his might, cannot be relished by any one. What is all this, but a blind man quiz-

zing the pleasure arising from prospects or pictures? and the deaf man who shall exclaim against the charms of musical sounds? Well says the Bard of reason,

Each want of happiness by hope supplied,
And each vacuity of sense by pride.

Essay on Man.

This preference in all men to their own pursuits and acquirements is quaintly ascribed by a French theologian to the mercy of God, "who has taught the frogs to be pleased with their own notes as musical."—See *Father Francis Garesse, in his "Somme Theologique."*

Conquest of Mexico.

Montaigne, speaking of the Mexicans, commends their industry and skill in the arts, and their many virtues. "But as for devotion, observance of the laws, goodness, liberality, loyalty, and plain dealing, it was of service to us that we had not so great a share of those virtues as they: for by this advantage they ruined, sold, and betrayed themselves. Take away, I say, this *disparity* from the conquerors, and you take from them all the source of so many victories."—*Montaigne's Essays, vol. iii. chap. 6.* This palpable irony of the honest old Gascon is as honourable

to his character, as disgraceful to the European invaders of South America. The philosophy of the matter is explained by the following lines in a dramatic writer of some credit :

Are not conquests good titles?

Conquests are great thefts.

Then would I rob for kingdoms ; and if I obtained, fain would I see him that durst call the conqueror a thief.

Lilly's Midas.

Simplicity.

This is one of many words that are more often used than understood. M. Fontenelle, in his *Essay on Pastorals*, talks much against superfluous ornament in the description of rural life and manners ; and yet in his own pastorals all the shepherds and shepherdesses talk and think like ladies of fashion and *petits maitres* in the coteries of Paris. The late Mr. Mason the poet addresses simplicity, and invokes her aid in the beginning of his "Garden ;" but the nymph did not listen to the poet, or Mr. Mason did not know what simplicity is, for his poem is very starch and artificial. The story of the statue, though a love story, is very far from possessing the least pretensions to any of the charms of natural simplicity.

A Lady Warrior.

Virgil, though it is admitted, proves himself inferior to Homer in splendour of thought and fertility; yet in judgment he is now and then, perhaps, the superior to the old Grecian bard. On the first view of the passage, Virgil seems more judiciously to have assigned swiftness of foot to Camilla, than Homer did to Achilles; but when we come to consider that running swiftly was one of the great prize exercises in their Olympic games, Homer stands not only exempt from any dispraise, but shews fine judgment in giving to his great hero the epithet of swift-footed—an accomplishment which would have conferred eminent praises on a candidate at the Olympic games.

A Wise Saying of an Ancient.

It is true that many sayings of the greater sages confer little credit on their morals, wit, or religion; as very many recorded by Diogenes, Laertius, and others, are cynical, obscene, impious, and dull—the latter quality being the most excusable. The following answer, however, of Chrysippus the stoic deserves to be written in letters of gold. When he was told by some persons that many spoke ill of him, he replied, “ I will

live in such a manner, that no one shall believe them."

The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation. That away,
Men are but gilded or but painted clay.
Shakespeare, Richard II.

John Gay.

This elegant poet, in his celebrated fable of the "Hare and many Friends," seems not happy in his comparison of love and friendship :

Friendship, like love, is but a name,
Unless to one you stint the flame.

This singular position cannot be reconciled with our experience of the two different qualities of these passions thus introduced, unless we suppose that John Gay meant a poet's friend—a patron; to *one* undoubtedly it would be the poet's *interest* to "stint his flame," and exclusively confine his attentions.

Picturesque.

Perhaps nothing will more clearly mark out the difference between the picturesque and the beautiful, than the present dress of men in England. When we view a picture of the most comely and graceful man in this dress, and compare another figure in a Turkish habiliment, no one can be

so little conversant with the pleasures of the eye, as not to prefer the foreign dress to the formality of the English one. We are indebted to the French for this unpicturesque form of our clothing; a people remarkably deficient in matters of taste, viz. poetry, music, painting, architecture, and sculpture.

Syllogisms.

How well has the author of *Hudibras* ridiculed these pedantic instruments to promote disputation, and which make it an endless contest and play of words:

This pagan heathenish invention
Is good for nothing but contention;
For as in sword and buckler fight
All blows do on the target light,
So when men argue, the greatest part
Of the contest falls on terms of art;
Until the fustian stuff be spent,
And then they fall to th' argument.

Canto 3.

On Dress.

The utility and propriety of attending to this article in life's economy are daily shewn by the disgust which slovenness produces, and the respect which neatness inspires. A lawyer and a poet have given us wise observations on this subject. My Lord Coke was, as Lloyd reports, remarked

for his delight in neat apparel, and well worn ; and used to say, “ that the outward neatness of our bodies might be a monitor of purity to our souls.”* Dr. Johnson, in his “ Lives of the Poets,” relates, that Shenstone used “ to hold that fashion was no rule in dress, and that every man was to suit his appearance to his natural form.” Well advises the poet on this head :

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,
But not express'd in fancy ; rich, not gaudy ;
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.
Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Oliver Cromwell.

The following summing up of this usurper's character, by a sensible and impartial writer,† is a brief but comprehensive chronicle of the trials of ambition. “ To finish Cromwell's character, I will add, that in the beginning of the Long Parliament he was a Presbyterian ; after that he threw himself into the Independent party, and was even one of their leaders, and affected to be of the number of the Enthusiasts ; but when he had accepted the Protectorship, he was neither Presbyterian, nor Independent, nor Republican, nor Enthusiast.” So truly sings the poet,

* Lloyd's State Worthies. † Ibid.

'Tis a common proof,
 That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
 Whereto the climber upwards turns his face :
 And when he once attains the upmost round,
 He then unto the ladder turns his back,
 Looks at the clouds, scorning the base degrees
 By which he did ascend, &c.

Shakespeare's Julius Cæsar.

Acquaintance.

Men who are sufficiently employed in business or grave pursuits set little value upon acquaintance, but consider the possession of a friend with a greater degree of attachment, than persons who find a difficulty to employ the hour that is passing over their heads. To such trifling characters a friend appears a thing of too great magnitude to engage their fixed attentions. Friendship to such triflers is an object too vast for their intellectual vision to take in. They pursue the acquaintance of the day, and avoid any more permanent interest. Shew some men Stonehenge, and they will employ themselves in searching for pebbles that lie at their feet : to such men friendship is terrific as a duty, while an acquaintance is easily dismissed at the suggestion of selfishness.

He ought not to pretend to friendship's name,
 Who reckons not himself and friend the same.

Tuke's Adventures of Five Hours.

Gothic Architecture.

It has been well observed that Grecian architecture is the offspring of reason, and the Gothic of fancy. The symmetry that prevails throughout the former, and the variety of forms and parts which constitute the latter, style of building, seem to justify the description. Whoever has read Milton, (and who has not?) will allow that the Gothic architecture and its accompaniments are almost exclusively adapted to religious purposes; and will incline him to repeat, "with the same spirit that the author wrote," his beautiful lines on this subject—

But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And love the high embowed roof
With antic pillars, massy proof,
And storied windows, richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.

Il Penseroso.

A singularly witty Sarcasm.

A very passionate rider, in company with his friend of a cooler temperament, was continually urging his poor steed into rage by his unreasonable severity. The friend, in a low voice, exclaimed, "Be quiet, and shew yourself the lesser beast of the two." The passionate rider exclaimed, 'Sir,

do you call me a beast?" "I was addressing myself to your horse," replied the sage companion, very coolly.—*Menagiana*.

Aristotle and Lord Bacon.

This extraordinary writer, equally famous for the extent of his learning, the sagacity of his intellect, and the unweariness of his industry, despised the vain sophistry of his coeval philosophers, and applied to experiment as the test of his truths. My Lord Bacon, a man of talents scarcely inferior to Aristotle, was so disgusted with his Theory of Logic, that he seems to have thought that the Greek philosopher had no sound reasoning in any of his works. In his "*Novum Organum*," Lord Bacon seemed to think that, by introducing the arguing by induction, instead of by syllogism, he was destroying the foundation of the Aristotelian philosophy. Had his Lordship cast his eye on the "*Metaphysics*" of his opponent, he would not have thought of the Stagirite's logical powers so slightly as he seems to have done. "From experiments we proceeded to the possession of knowledge of things, and in this we found science," are the first words in the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle.

Puns.

Swift used to say that no one despised puns but those who could not make them. It is certain that very great authors have not thought them below their dignity. In the first six books of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, a very grave as well as very noble poem, no less than twenty very indifferent puns may be found. Cicero did not disdain them; and though poets, and their cousin-germans the orators, have many poetic licences, yet what shall we say when stately historians make use of them. Livy deigns to pun in his most grave passages: "*Plebiscitum quo oneratus magis sum quam honoratus primus antiquo abrogoque*:" *lib. 2.* Velleius Paterculus has admitted a pun on a very sensible remark on human nature. "*Naturaliter, audita visis laudamus libentius, et præsentia invidia, præterita veneratione prosequimur; et his nos obrui illis instrui credimus*:" *lib. 2.*

Magnanimity and Roman Boasting.

The following speeches of M. Livius Drusus are equally in character with ancient Roman manners and spirit. "M. Livius Drusus, a young nobleman who was stabbed in a mob quarrel, was killed by a knife piercing his side, in a court

of his own house. His last words were to the surrounding multitude. "When will ye, Romans, have again a citizen equal to me?" When his architect promised to build his house free from the vicinity and the overlooking of any neighbour, "Build me," says Drusus, "a house (if your art can do it) in such a situation, and of such a form, that every man may see what I am doing."—*Velleius Pat. lib. ii. c. 14.*

Anecdotes of Painting, &c.

The very lively writer and compiler of these anecdotes of Artists, amuses by his vivacity as well as he instructs by his accuracy and industry. In his History of Ancient and Modern Gardening, he speaks of the invention of the *Ha Ha!* and the excellent use which Mr. Kent, our first landscape gardener, made of the invention; and the vivacity of his style exuberates in this place into the sublime. "The genius of Kent leaped the *Ha Ha!* and found all nature was a garden."—*Anecdotes of Painting, &c. 4 vols.*

Ancient Philosophers.

Many sayings and observations of these reputed sages of antiquity are of very doubtful merit, and some of very dangerous tendency. Some that

are worth remembering shall be laid before the reader.

Socrates

Said well to one who asked him which was the easiest and shortest road to obtain an honest name, "Be that very character which you wish your neighbours to believe you to be."—*Cicero de Offic.*

Solon.

This eminent legislator of the Greeks was asked, "Why he did not enact a law against *parricide*?" "I could not suppose it to be possible," replied the philosopher. With commendable caution he acted in regard to imposing penalties on crimes unknown to his countrymen: "Such notices," said the sage, "are more calculated to put these things into people's heads, than to restrain the commission of them."

Plato.

He observed of governments that that commonwealth would flourish most, where a philosopher was at the head, or where the head of the state was a philosopher, that is, a wise man.—*Cicero ad Quin. Frat.* "We are not born for ourselves alone," said this philanthropical sage; "part of our time and talents our country demands, part

our parents and relations, and the remainder is due to our friends."

Dionenes, the Cynic.

The opinions and sayings of this philosopher *en diskabille* are only sometimes producible. He claimed a superiority over the Great King of Persia (as the flattery of the time called him). "My wants and desires," said the philosopher, "are moderate and few; the king's are many and inordinate; mine are easily obtained; his difficult, and in some cases impossible."—*Cicero's Tuscul. Questions*. 5. These just opinions of human felicity and its abode are well described in the excellent old song beginning—

"My mind to me a kingdom is."

Timotheus.

An Athenian citizen of a most respectable character, having dined with Plato the philosopher, praised the entertainment very highly, and meeting his host the next morning exclaimed, "Plato, your feasts are not only grateful at the time, but next morning are delightful on reflection." Such a feast our great moral poet has nobly described—

The feast of reason, and the flow of soul.

Pope.

Theocritus.

A late learned and ingenious writer on "Taste*" has given a most singular opinion of the poems of Theocritus. "There is another description of erotic poets, who combined the refinements of *sentimental* love with the manners of primæval simplicity and the imagery of pastoral life, as we see in the love-sick and sentimental savages, shepherds, and ploughmen of Theocritus." It would be a difficult task to find, amidst the strains of the Sicilian Bard, any love but *l'amour physique*, as the French term it; and that often expressed in very coarse diction, and thoughts very remote from the sentimental.

Good-Nature and Good-Humour.

In marking the distinction of these terms, so often confounded, Mr. Knight shews an acute mind and an attentive observation of life. "Good-nature is that benevolent sensibility of mind which disposes us to feel both the happiness and misery of others, and to endeavour to promote the one and mitigate the other. Failures, in both cases, often produce in the countenance and demeanour of the good-natured man a seeming melancholy

* An Analytical Enquiry into the Principles of Taste, p. 187, by R. P. Knight, 8vo. 1806.

and austerity. Good-humour, on the contrary, is that prompt susceptibility of every kind of social festive gratification which a mind void of sorrow in itself or about others, from want of thought and sensibility, will ever exhibit."—*Analytical Enquiry*, &c. p. 417.

Old Age.

Though this state of human existence is sufficiently calamitous and wretched by its own evils, yet do the licentious tongues and inconsiderate brains of others augment its penalties. Avarice, in many instances, is charged upon old persons unjustly, as their love of old furniture, baubles, &c. which they continue to retain and hoard up from their associations of ideas concerning them. "This sofa," says an old man, "was given me by a particular friend; this carpet I bought on the day of my marriage; this bookcase I had when at college"; &c. Thus the pleasure of old recollections store an old man's house with old-fashioned things, that modern times will wag their heads at.

A Bon-Mot on the French Music.

M. D'Alembert, who, among his other accomplishments, possessed a considerable knowledge and skill in music, wrote a treatise, called the *Liberty or Rights of Music*." This is a learned

and facetious defence of J. J. Rousseau, who had attacked the French style in music, and recommended the Italian *goût*. J. Rousseau's attack occasioned much dissension and sensation at Paris; and the writer was considered as the "disturber of the public repose." "This expression," says D'Alembert, "well accords with J. J. Rousseau's intention, which was, by abolishing the flat music of the French, to introduce a species which for the future should keep the audience *awake*."

An excellent Turn in a person who was no Orator.

When the Athenians were meditating the erection of some grand public monument, they summoned before them two of their most eminent architects. One was a great orator, the other a man of few words. When the former had harangued a considerable time on his art and his own talents, the other was expected and called on to produce what he had to say for his art and himself. "Gentlemen," replied the man of few words, "I promise to do all that the great orator has talked about."

On Tragic Theatrical Exhibitions.

It is a singular observation of a sensible and acute writer, that men must have exhausted a large

source of amusement, before they invented the representations of the evils and misfortunes of their fellow-creatures upon a public stage, and to make them spectators of sorrows (they were too well acquainted with), in order to assuage them, and to relieve their sufferings.—*D'Alembert's Letters to J. J. Rousseau.*

Missionaries.

These persons being commissioned to convert adult persons (whose habits, be what they may, are already fixed and uncompliant) must often fail; for, though ignorance of their grown-up pupils may be very profound, yet their obstinacy and prejudice are equally unpromising objects of instruction and amendment. In religious and moral subjects, as in medicine, means of prevention in a disorder are easier than the cure of it. Schools established in barbarous countries seem the only methods of propagating religious and moral truth in youthful minds.

Seneca.

The style of this author seems more congenial with that of our lively neighbours the French, than with our own. The French language, though precise, is not rich and various, like the English; and is therefore more indebted to lively turns for

the support of their thoughts than our own. Seneca, whatever may be his subject, aims at a brilliancy of expression, and is fond of using what the French call "une tour de phrase," and "une façon de parler;" which modes of writing make Seneca, on the first reading, rather impressive, and in the second tiresome. But simplicity in writing bears a strong analogy to the pleasure which we receive in the other arts of composition by the pen or the pencil; and we accord with the poetical critic—

Poets, like painters, thus unskill'd to trace
The naked nature, and the living grace;
With gold and jewels cover ev'ry part,
And hide with ornaments their want of art.

Pope's Essay on Criticism.

A Modern Plagiarism, taken from Bion the Poet.

It is said that the late George Stevens, (one of the commentators of Shakespeare,) on reading the poem of the "Pursuits of Literature," said they were verses made as *pegs* to hang the notes on. An ancient writer on superstition, describing a superstitious man, who, thinking his misfortunes in life to be the effect of divine vengeance upon him, represents the poor man as surrounded by old women, collecting all his sins and transgressions, and making him as a nail or *peg* to hang them all upon.—*Plutarch of "Superstition."*

Difference between Reading and Disputing.

Men who are fond of argument, very often are seen not only to raise their voices too high for easy utterance, but to work up their minds by this violent exercise of their lungs. An excellent author recommends reading aloud as a relaxation from the former laborious elocution; and his comparison is very singular and happy. "What riding in a coach is to exercise, so is reading in respect to disputing; for in reading you carry your voice softly and low, and, as it were, in the chariot of another man's language."—*Plutarch's Rules for the Preservation of Health.*

Retort Courteous.

A gentleman who was rather an admirer of literature than a man of letters himself, praised the abilities of a literary friend in terms rather beyond what he himself was able to appreciate. "My friend" (says the eulogist) "talks so correctly, and at the same time so fluently, that one would think that he was reciting out of a book." A man in company, who knew this pedant alluded to, and also that he possessed a great memory, and was a very stupid fellow *per se*, replied, "Your

friend, Sir, most probably, *did* recite out of a book."

Obscure Writers.

Those writers, as Lycophron in Greek, and Tacitus in Latin, who attempted to recommend their works by the obscurity of their style, must have supposed that their readers had eyes like a cat, which sees objects better in the dark than in the light. Authors of riddles and enigmas give you warning that they mean to be obscure, and you may read them or not, as your inclination may be towards these "works of darkness." When a writer of history, and of an epic poem, entraps you in their subterraneous caverns and shades below, you have a right to complain; as you would of a bad cook, who not only balks the indulgence of your appetite, but injures your digestion by his ill-dressed dishes.

The Arabian Nights.

By superficial readers and *soi-disant* philosophers these most amusing tales have been decried as fit only to amuse children. Without going over the grounds of their literary merit, such objections to them will be obviated by stating, that modern travellers in the eastern countries have borne

testimony to the accurate delineation of the manners, laws, and customs, which these Arabian Tales discover. We hear, indeed, scholars, who, under the bondage of classical authority, declaim on the fictions of the Greek and Latin poets, speak of the Arabian Nights with contempt; but let such read the excellent introduction to the Tales, prefixed to a late translation of them, by a profound oriental scholar;* and if they then desist from reading them, and having read them are not highly pleased, I should suspect that such scholars may perhaps *read* Greek and Latin with skill, but their intellect and powers of fancy, and their candour, may be equally called in question.

Dependence.

This term is very often confined to that unfortunate state, where a poor man of spirit depends on a wealthy patron for support. It may be extended, however, to any situation in society, wherein a man becomes dependent on his neighbour for amusement. He who cannot pass an evening without a rubber at whist, must depend on at least three good friends to help him out: the lover of his bottle must have at least one associate. Thrice happy is the man who is enabled, by edu-

* Jonathan Scott, esq; interpreter to the late Governor Hastings.

cation and habit, to depend upon himself for his amusement and employment in business or literary pursuits, and to be “*nunquam minus solus quam cum solus.*”

Mason and Gray.

These two friends so long cultivated the same fields of literature, that the taste of each partook of the same soil, as is discoverable in their writings and disposition. Finicalness in manner, and excessive love of finery in their phraseology, were the characteristics of both in their writings and demeanour; but Gray, being the superior poet, rose above the degrading parts of his character by a strength of genius, to which the other could never attain.

Parsimony and Extravagance.

It is truly laughable to hear persons rail at one error, and pass by the other in silence, and often with panegyric; though it is well known that the one may be practised with honesty, whilst the other must be at the expense of some persons more or less. Tacitus, or Rochefaucault, or Mandeville, would soon set this apparent folly in its true light, by saying rogues and knaves are benefited by the

folly of extravagance, and so praise it ; and being the majority of mankind, carry the question quite hollow against the guarded and unproductive conduct of the parsimonious man.

Novels.

As these compositions, in the present times, have ceased to be romances or fictitious relations, but a real transcript of life, the authors of them should be particularly careful of making them faithful depositories of the facts in real life. They extend over immense regions of readers in middling life, who are influenced by their sentiments, and wish them to be their guides through those scenes with which they are likely to be conversant. They leave their superiors the interest they may take in the grander works of history and state politics, to which their humbler stations must necessarily continue them to be strangers.

Romans and Carthaginians.

When the former accused the latter people of being faithless—"fides Punica,"—they forgot their own invasions and plots against other nations, and their attempts at universal monarchy by every mode of unjust usurpation. Virgil, however, did

not blush to record their ambition of governing all nations; but in very *courtly* lines has celebrated and praised their boundless appetite of reigning as Mistress of the World—

Tu regere imperio gentes, Romane, memento:
Hæ tibi erunt artes, &c.

and leaves to other nations the meaner arts of sculpture, oratory, and astronomy. Surely it had been better for ancient Rome that Julius Cæsar had been an astronomer only, or an orator; and for modern Italy, that Bonaparte had been a fiddler instead of a warrior.

Reason and Instinct.

The admirable John Locke has well described human reason as brought from the infancy of ignorance to the maturity of aged instruction, and as a compound of repeated experiments. Instinct, we know, in beasts wants no discipline, and seems to act instantaneously, as the case requires; and some light may, perhaps, be thrown on the dispute, on the superiority of reason over instinct, by stating, that instinct seems to be “ready made” whilst reason wants a great deal of *drilling*, before it can perform its proper exercises.

Two dangerous Terms in Society.

There are not two words more fatal to human happiness, in public and private life, than "liberty" and "genteel." The first word sets a parcel of fools at continual variance for a state of superiority, to which they have no claim by the Constitution; and the last term raises, in private life, an ambition of expense, to which the purse of the individual is not adequate, and to which his rank in society has no just pretensions. The *genteel-mania* makes a poor gentleman adopt many shifts to keep up appearances, and occasions many a blush at the feeble contrivances. In Ben Jonson's "Every one in his Humour," the efforts of Capt. Bobadil to hide his poverty on the visit of his genteeler, because richer, friend "Master Mathew," are truly comic. "The cabin is convenient," says the Captain, "but, Master Mathew, possess no man with knowledge of my lodgings;" which were, he was conscious, much below the gentility of the rank which he had assumed.

Rules for Thinking.

The great J. Locke has laid down an excellent method for rightly considering a subject. He advises that we should throw all our thoughts on

paper, in order the better to judge of them by seeing them all together ; because the mind is not capable of retaining clearly a long chain of consequences, and seeing, without confusion, the relation of a great number of different ideas. Besides, those thoughts which we admired, when considered in a gross and perplexed manner, appear to be totally inconsistent, when we see every one, and each distinctly.

N.B. This excellent mode of analysis was said to have been adopted by Benjamin Franklin,—*Character of Mr. Locke, prefixed to a collection of several pieces of J. L. vol. i. London, 1724.*

From the same.

Mr. Locke used to say, that the knowledge of the arts contained more true philosophy than all those fine learned hypotheses which have no relation to the nature of things, and are fit for nothing at bottom, but to make men lose their time in inventing or comprehending them. Mr. Locke highly disapproved of those authors that labour only to destroy, and establish nothing in their room, &c. "A building," says he, "displeases them: they find great fault in it. Let them demolish it and welcome, provided they endeavour to raise another in its place."

The Man at Home, and the Man Abroad.

Two amusing poems might be written on these subjects, by a man of wit, in imitation of the "Allegro" and "Penseroso." Many a man, leaving his home discontented, feels the truth of the poet's description —

Scarce past the turnpike half a-mile,
How all the country seems to smile.

R. Lloyd's Poem.

How different is the state of mind of many a man at home! It was the boast of a learned Roman, that he was never less alone than when alone; whilst it may be said of many a luckless man, from debt or discontent, that he is never less at home than when at home.

Ranting Tragedies.

When the poet, in his composition, seems possessed of more enthusiasm than he can excite in the minds of his audience, he exhibits the awkward situation of an impetuous rider on a dull beast; and, in common parlance, the man rides faster than his horse. John Dennis, no mean critic, has said well on this subject: "he who would raise the passions of a judicious auditor, must be sure to take his audience with him. If they be in a calm

humour, it is in vain for him to be in a huff: he must move and kindle them by degrees, otherwise he will be in danger of setting his own stubble on fire, and burning out himself, without burning the company."—*Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy, Dryden's prose works, vol. ii.*

N.B. It is singular that Dryden, who, in his tragedies, often sets his own stubble on fire, should quote this passage from J. Dennis with approbation: "Lee was not madder in some cases than the great Dryden."

German Morals.

To combine great crimes and vices with eminent virtues in the same character, as in the "Robber," the "Stranger," &c. and to conciliate the audience to a vicious character, is too often the blemish of the German drama. However a *sentimental* reader, English or German, may weep tenderly at such representations, yet the man of principle and sound intellect will read such attempts to confound virtue and vice with just indignation, and fully concur with the sentiments of our great Dramatist—

Force would prevail, or rather right and wrong
(Between whose endless jar justice resides)
Would lose their names, and so would justice too.

Troilus and Cressida, scene 5.

Grief and Joy.

The cups of sorrow and happiness seem to have their limited capacities, and to contain a given quantity; after which the contents overflow, and are lost on the ground. A man full of sorrows has no feeling of the fresh miseries of his friends around him. The author of the "Shipwreck" (a fine but neglected poem) describes strongly and justly the state of men of a crew in danger of seeing their vessel and their companions wrecked, and fearing their destruction :

Those who remain their fearful doom await,
Nor longer mourn their lost companions' fate.
The heart that bleeds with sorrows all its own
Forgets the pangs of friendship to bemoan.

The Shipwreck, canto 3.

Chemistry, its Difficulties.

As the pursuit of this science is now so popular, that the idle and the busy man seem equally zealous in the toils of the laboratory, a caution from an eminent writer and chemist on the subject will no doubt be acceptable to the modest student in this branch of philosophy. "There is far greater trouble in making experiments, than those who have not been accustomed to the business can readily conceive; many niceties are to be

attended to, the least of which being omitted, the conclusion becomes doubtful. The mind, moreover, having once acquired the striking outlines of knowledge, has not always patience to attempt filling up the minuter part of the design, especially if its attention can be but accidentally employed on the subject."—*Chemical Essays, by R. Watson, D. D. F. R. S. vol. ii. 12mo.*

Hints to Novelists, Poets, and Sentimentalists.

"There is something amusing to the imagination in the idea of a lonely cottage : in a woody country, it can hardly fail to be more or less picturesque, and seclusion is apt to excite a soothing notion of a freedom from the vices of society. Innocence, it is to be hoped, may be found in all situations ; but there are vices of solitude as well as of crowded cities, and those who have had opportunity for observation will not believe that lonely cottages are generally the abodes of innocence. A dwelling out of the view of men has a tendency to promote far more the predatory character of the night-prowling fox, than the quiet temper of the gregarious sheep, or the valuable industry of the swarming bee."—*Principles of Design in Architecture; printed for Cadell and Davies, 1809.*

Study.

The following sentences, from Mr. Locke's Thoughts concerning Reading, cannot be too deeply impressed on the mind of the student. Having just before recommended a strict examination of all propositions laid before us, and declaring that without this process a man doth but talk after the books which he hath read, collecting *learning* instead of *knowledge*, he goes on,—“ the last step therefore in improving the understanding is to find out upon what foundation any proposition advanced bottoms, and to observe the connection of the intermediate ideas by which it is joined to that foundation or that principle from which it is derived. This, in short, is right reasoning, and by *this way alone* true knowledge is to be got by reading and studying.”—*Collection of several Pieces of John Locke, not extant in his works.* 1724.

Locke on the Human Understanding.

It was objected by a friend to Mr. Locke, that this celebrated treatise was too diffuse in its style, by the admission of frequent repetitions of the same ideas in various modes of expression. Mr. Locke answered, that these repetitions were intentionally inserted, in order that some readers might

have the opportunity of apprehending the subject by its being put into a variety of ways. Had this great writer brought several illustrations, instead of different forms of expressions, the method would have been more satisfactory. To this diffuseness of style, if the controversial nature of the subject be added, considerable difficulties arise among young readers of this profound inquiry into the origin of our ideas. Abridgements of this treatise were published in 1808, London, 1 vol. 8vo. more suitable to the patience of the younger student; and Wynne's, published, 1 vol. 8vo. London, 1696.

Ben Jonson.

This author is a singular instance of a man of talents and learning being without the power, or but in a small degree, of interesting his reader. His tragedies few can read; and his comedies are not only unentertaining, but abound in characters which the "earth owns not." In *Every Man in his Humour*, there is a character, Master Mathew, which is composed of excessive folly and imbecility. Such a personage Jonson knew himself, on the authority of the ancient critics,* was not admissible on the stage, and common sense confirms the decree. Master Mathew is a dead weight

* See Aristotle's Poetics.

on the whole play, though the best of his comedies, and that wherein the character of a jealous man, Kately, is excellently portrayed. My Lord Bacon has shrewdly said, that books do not teach the use of books ; and Jonson well exemplified the apophthegm.

Friendship.

What Ovid said of love may with equal truth be repeated on the subject of friendship—

Nec eadem sede morantur
Majestas et amor.

For love admits no master to controul
His voluntary gift of heart and soul.

Equality is the latitude in which friendship takes root most readily ; and at a certain distance from this equatorial line, the intercourse between friends is seen to cool. In the higher stations of life, as in the upper regions of the air, a certain quantity of cold unrespirable air is soon felt by the balloon adventurers into these currents of a more elevated atmosphere. “ *Dulcis inexpertis cultura potentis amici,*” says a writer very conversant with the great and very familiar with them.

Cochetia.

Persons who have lived all their years in a large city have been often ridiculed for their

ignorance and contempt of rural objects and concerns. The strongest example of the general truth of this censure was shewn in the answer of a Frenchman to his friend, who asked him, after a rural excursion, how he liked the Rhine. "It is very well," replied the Parisian, "for a country river." A singular observation was made by a person of a similar description on great rivers, viz. that it was a marvellous instance of the kindness of Providence to place large rivers so near to large towns.

Country Residence.

Every educated man of small fortune has found in a country residence the great difficulty, if not impossibility, of procuring the company of a man of sense and talents. Men of no "mark or likelihood" are more easily obtained than got rid of, who are ready "to bestow all their tediousness upon you, and would be, if they had twice as much." If your neighbour is a man of talents or acquirement, he has pursuits elsewhere; if he be ambitious, he is attending on his patron; if indigent, on his bookseller and editor; and if he is ingenious and idle, he is forming schemes to kill time, and drive away spleen.

Passionate Men.

Persons who are cursed with very irritable dispositions, yet endowed with good talents, in their attacks and conduct of them resemble old generals. They carry on their quarrels with great discretion; advance whenever they think it prudent, as far as they think they are not in imminent peril; and retire quietly, and discreetly, when they see more danger approach than they are willing to encounter. Men, who now and then only skirmish in anger, act like raw recruits; desirous to shew that they are not cowards, they shew too much boldness, or rather rashness, and commit themselves to the enemy, whose fury is under the most regular command and ancient discipline.

Arguments in Conversation.

Though many persons are very fond of supporting their occasional positions and opinions in common talk by arguing the question in point, yet how few are qualified, either by understanding or temper, to conduct this mode of controversy. With men in common, your opposing a single opinion is considered as a general attack upon their understanding, and though little interested in the subject in debate, yet in their mode of con-

ducting it they are most warmly concerned. In what is called polite company, that is, of men experienced in life, all arguing is looked upon as ill breeding, and a proof of the grossest pedantry.

Romances and Novels.

The readers of these first kind of compositions delight in the embattled castle, as the lover of modern novels is pleased with the honeysuckled cottage. With regard to the essential difference between the writers, with respect to the delineation of manners and characters, they are very opposite indeed. This difference may be illustrated by the titles of two celebrated modern novels, "Man as he is," and "Man as he is not." Amadis de Gaul differs as much from an Innamorato in a modern novel, as a spruce villa from a gothic mansion.

Low Company.

When a writer of fictitious history, "who has all the world before him where to choose," delights in introducing characters of humble life and dissipated minds, he either supposes that the public taste requires of him such personages, or he is fond of them himself. In both cases, the author thinks that he is justifiable in giving such speech

sentiments, and actions as seem suitable to his characters.* Hence much scenery, oratory, and description, very hurtful to the minds of young persons, occur in their favourite course of reading modern novels. Dr. Smollet is particularly objectionable in this point of introducing his reader to very low company.

Ludicrous Mistake in Terms.

Brydone relates, that in passing some river in Italy, a passenger in the boat observed, "that that great man Julius Cæsar had crossed this river." 'He must have been a *great* man,' replied one of the watermen, 'for the river is thirty feet deep in some places.' Mr. J. Spense, in his "Anecdotes," relates another of the same kind:—"Mr. Pope was with Sir Godfrey Kneller, when the painter's nephew came in, who was a Guinea trader. 'Nephew,' said Kneller, 'you have the honour of seeing the two *greatest* men in the world.' 'I do not know how *great* you may be,' said the Guinea man, 'but I don't like your looks: I have often bought a man much better than both of you together, all muscles and bones, for ten guineas.'"

* According to Horace,—

Reddere personæ acit convenientia cuique.

Anacreon.

It has been a dispute among some profound Greek scholars, whether this amatory bard is to be ranged with classic authors. Certain critics have considered him as a forgery of some Byzantine scholar. However, with some exceptions, he is less objectionable than some other classics of the erotic kind, and less loaded with mythologic fables than any of the minor Greek poets. Though his muse treats of love merely physical; yet one of his late translators, in this sentimental age of that passion, has exaggerated the warm language of the old Teian, so as to have brought a disgrace on his name, which he does not merit. In general, nature and simplicity prevail in his composition, though on themes which were likely to have led him into gross improprieties of thought and diction.

N.B. Let the reader compare T. Moore's translation with that of T. Girdlestone, M.D. 1804, 2d edit. the latter is more like Anacreon, the other like—T. Moore.

Love at First Sight.

Some grave reasoners have doubted the existence of love at first sight, though experience tells us that, in many cases, it is more likely to happen

than at the second interview; for then the observer becomes more cool, and examines the mind of his favourite object, which has little to do with her external beauties; and it is well known that what are called love-matches are seldom or never happy.

Oh! how the spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day;
Which now shews all the beauty of the sun,
But knows of him no more.

Shakespeare's Two Gentlemen of Verona.

Shenstone,

Who sought his chief happiness, though he ultimately found his misery, in the regions of fancy, has well observed on a common error of the imagination. "I have often considered why those possessed of palaces, yet often esteem a root-house or a cottage as a desirable object in their gardens. Is it not from having the experience of the imperfection of happiness in higher life, that they are led to *conceive* it more complete under a straw roof, where, perhaps, it may really be as defective as in the apartments of a minister or a king?" A living poet, who has searched into the scenes of the cottage with equal diligence and humanity, have given us the inside of one with a most melancholy detail :

Come, search within ; nor sight nor smell regard,
 The true physician walks the foulest ward.
 See, on the floor what frowsy patches rest,
 What nauseous fragments on yon fractur'd nest.

*"The Parish Register," Poems by the
 Rev. G. Crabbe, 1809.*

Natural Philosophy.

The too quick transition from the study of natural phenomena to the causes of them is one instance of the pride and weakness of human learning. The diligent search into the various phenomena of nature, and the technical arrangement of them, in vegetables, has rendered the name of Linnæus immortal. Even the wonderful abilities and learning of Newton, though he had observed, with an accuracy and profundity unequalled, the phenomena of the skies, did not enable him to search into the causes of gravity and attraction; but his modesty was satisfied with stating facts, and not establishing systems: the errors of Descartes shewed the sense of the English philosopher.

M. Descartes.

Born with a volatility of fancy which marred his judgment, Descartes was not contented to observe phenomena with the modest patience of

Newton, but soon attempted to account for them. He was eager to build a world that should not be easily destroyed; and his favourite "Theory of Atoms" shows with how strong materials he wished to raise his structure. Without any intention, Descartes gave assurance to the mechanical philosophy, (which supposes the world to move as a mere machine,) and thus he excludes the agency of a Deity in its structure and preservation.

On Reputation. A Fable.

The following instructive fable is taken from one of Howel's Letters, but it does not appear to what collection it belongs; perhaps it was the production of the ingenious author's fancy.* "It happened that *Fire*, *Water*, and *Fame*, went to travel together; and they consulted, if they lost one another, how they might be recovered, and meet again. *Fire* said, when you see smoke, you shall find me; *Water* said, when you see marsh and moorish low grounds, you shall find me; but *Fame* said, take heed how you lose me, for if you do, you run a great hazard never to meet me again: there's no retrieving of me."—*Howel's Fam. Letters*, vol. ii. letter 14.

* It seems to be an Eastern fable.

Balloons.

What would the lively writer above-mentioned have said of these specimens of modern ingenuity and bravery, who talks so triumphantly on the discoveries about his own times? "Though in former times a bishop's head was sent (apart from his body) to dwell among the *Antipodes*, because he first hatched and held that opinion; yet our East-India navigators, who so often cross the equator and tropics, will tell you it's a gross error to hold there are no *Antipodes*. For a man to walk upon the ocean when the surges were at the highest, and to make a dull piece of wood to swim, nay fly, upon the water, was held as impossible a thing, as it is now thought to fly in the air." —*Howel's F. Letters, vol. iii. letter 9.*

A Poet.

The Latin saying, "*Poeta nascitur non fit,*" was uttered with little consideration on the subject. Poetry, like any other art, requires knowledge. The very essence of poetry consists of figurative language, tropes, metaphors, and allegories, which no writer can use, without some intimate knowledge of those matters from whence

they were borrowed. One difference between Shakespeare and other poets is, the Warwickshire bard was a good naturalist; and all his metaphors taken from nature are very correct in their parts, as well as very beautiful in their structure and application. Of Shakespeare we may truly sing, in the lines of a modern poet :

Hail! glorious Bard, whose high command
A thousand various strings obey;
While joins and mixes to thy hand
At once the bold and tender lay.

Not mighty Homer down Parnassus steep
Rolls the full tide of verse so clear, and yet so deep.
Ode on the Power of Poetry, Dodsley's Collect. vol. 3.

T. Warton and Gray.

It may be wondered, that in the excellent comparison* between these two poetical and learned men, their Latin poetry was omitted, being subjects in which they most approached towards each other's merits. The Latin specimens of Gray and Warton are delightful: the fragment, "De Principiis Cogitandi," of the former, and the "Mons Catharinæ," of the latter writer, have more perspicuity and ease than their compositions in their own language. Gray's verses on the "Chartreuse" will not be degraded by a com-

* See Memoirs of the Life, &c. of T. Warton, by R. Mant, M.A. 1802.

parison with Warton's Latin inscriptions. To carry on the comparison of these elegant and ingenious scholars, we must prefer the comic muse of Warton to that of Gray. The "Long Story" cannot be compared with the "Progress of Discontent," of Warton. Gray's attempt at humour frequently failed in success; and humour seems the faculty in which Warton highly excelled, as may be seen in the specimens of his, in the "Oxford Sausage," and in some papers of the "Connoisseur." T. Warton possessed all the humour of the Dean of St. Patrick's, without his grossness or indelicacy.

Female Garrulity.

The Archbishop of Cambray, in his treatise on "Female Education,"* enters into the reasons why women are so talkative. "First," says the prelate, "women are too often indulged in romantic friendships, accustomed to excessive compliments and flatteries, and jealousies among one another. Accustomed to consider a facility of talking as a proof of genius, they discourse on trifles with unmeasurable length; and, fond of trifles, they neither pay attention to select their subjects, or to the true method of conversing, viz. to say a

* L' Education des Filles. 12me. Amsterdam, 1708.

great deal in few words; and to be nice in the subjects on which they harangue. Secondly, women are brought up with too much art and finesse, which they apply to all their schemes and fancies. Now these plans are carried on in a roundabout manner, as women are naturally timid and shame-faced, and so become *actresses* in all they do, and most eloquent *orators* on whatever topic is near their heart, besides the facility with which they can call tears to their assistance, &c."

Talent for Satire.

Young persons of lively parts, and inexperienced in life and characters, are very lavish of their censures on men and things. They soon, however, (if the lively blossoms of their youth set in the fruit of their understanding,) discover that a very small degree of wit is sufficient to find fault, and utter abuse. A little wit, with a convenient share of ill-nature, will enable a man to be satirical; but it requires a good deal of sense to praise worthy objects, as in such there is a great quantity of matter of the best sort, and they require commensurate abilities and judgment to give them their share and kind of encomium. The last resource of ignorance is a sneer, when the person is conscious he can give no answer; and

herein the intended satire falls on the feeble attempt to be satirical. Boileau said to his friend Racine, one day, "You say things that hurt me, not from the power with which they are uttered, but by an intention you shew to be satirical."

Metaphors.

It seems very incorrect, in so polished a writer as Mr. Pope, to have composed the following metaphor on no rational grounds:—

A little learning is a dangerous thing.
 Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring;
 For shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
 But drinking deeper sobers us again.

Art of Criticism.

This process is not true, if said of water, in the sense of intoxication; nor of wine, in any view. It seems, therefore, that the tralatitious meaning is grounded upon no foundation whatever. It may be supposed, by him who denounces water-drinking poets, that the Pierian spring had some enlivening quality, unknown to other waters.

Poetry and Prose.

We often see in prose writers a very lively fancy displayed in a variety of poetical figures; and in many productions of poetical, or rather

versifying, authors a total want of a proper quantity of metaphors and tropes to distinguish their compositions from those of prose. Lord Bacon, Dr. Johnson, Burke, and Gibbon (though an historian), deal in all the brilliant materials that make composition poetical, and exhibit the close alliance between rhetoric and poetry, and shew

What thin partitions do their bounds divide. *Pope.*

Study of Nature.

He who has no relish for a walk into the country in a fine day, has not cultivated the rich domains which imagination would bestow on him. He who flies to the fields from his study, either to avoid fatigue of business, or the probable visits of dull and irksome companions, on his first step from his home, feels a burden taken from his shoulders; his mind becomes elastic on a sudden; and he feels the truth of the Poet's lines—

The meanest flow'ret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common sun, the air, the skies,
To him are opening Paradise.

Gray.

Grammar.

The early and late attention to the science of Grammar can only find objections in the mind of a blockhead. How much of real knowledge

depends on the use of words! The poet, and his cousin-german the rhetorician, have their peculiar phrases; and the philosopher uses more precise and pure phraseology. The sensible Dean of St. Patrick was aware of the uncertainty of language, and in his didactic pieces has used the most primitive terms to avoid, as much as he could, any phrases of a figurative or metaphorical nature.

Cupid.

Though this little gentleman is very frequently celebrated by modern poets and painters, yet are his qualities often mistaken by the first, and his figure misrepresented by the latter, artists. Modern poets describe the God of Love to be blind; and the painters actually put a bandage on his eyes. A blind and skilful archer is a strange phenomenon. The ground-work of these modern errors seems to be that the idiom of classical expression is in both instances misunderstood. In classical lore, especially the poetical part, the agent and the patient take place of one another, and the action of the former recoils upon him: because love makes persons blind to the faults of others, the God of Love is called blind: this is well known to the readers of classical metaphors; but no one will find, in Spence's *Polymetis*, an account

of a blind or hood-winked Cupid: Mr Spence speaks of his sly and insidious looks, &c.

Ancient and Modern Dramas.

The personal introduction of gods and goddesses on the public stage by the most eminent writers, Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, &c. conveys a very disadvantageous idea of decorum in the religion of Greece. Since the refinement of modern manners, the English stage has quitted these profane and licentious mummeries. The old plays, called *Mysteries* and *Moralities*, were guilty of introducing the sacred characters of scripture in person. A most amusing history of this singular practice, and a learned detail and ingenious commentary on the "*Sacred Dramas*" are given by a late very excellent critic; in which the accurate antiquary and the man of taste, the fancy of the poet, and the piety of a christian writer, are amply displayed.—*T. Warton's History of Ancient English Poetry.*

Ancient and Modern Sepulchres.

Sculpture employed its most pleasing powers in the decoration of the ancient monument, or "*sarcophagus*;" and the imagery it exhibited was

grateful to the eye, and soothing to the feelings. Flowers, of the most beautiful colours and forms, spoke of the brevity of life's pleasures; and the butterfly, expanding its wings and seeking the upper regions, was a lively symbol of the soul's immortality. What shall we say of the coarse structure and design of our rural monuments,* but that they are equal to the poetry, which Gray says is written

To teach the rustic moralist to die;

but can convey to the eye of the more refined spectator nothing but the most disgusting images of the wrecks of the human frame.

Picturesque.

The poet Cowley's wish for a small house and a large garden seems in equal conformity to taste and good sense. When a house is too large for the premises, the picturesque effect is lost; the grounds about it appear scanty and mean. Lord Bacon, in his *Essay on Gardening*, says, with his usual soundness of judgment, "that buildings, in comparison with natural beauties, are gross handy works." To use an expression taken from musicians, "the house should play the second-fiddle,

* Skulls, bones, &c. tied together with a gay ribbon.

then true harmony is produced by its accompaniments. When a huge mansion stands on a small base of cultivated ground about it, it gives the appearance of a large inn without a sign, and of a rich owner without any taste.

A Bull of Alexander Pope, or what John Dennis would have called Pope Alexander's Bull.

In a poem which Pope seems to have written *con amore*, and with that laborious diligence which marked his literary efforts, we are surprised to find the oversight in this line—

And *sleepless* lovers just at twelve *awake*.

Poets, no doubt, are allowed to soar above reason, but not to contradict it. One cannot but smile at the precise time which is marked, in which persons are said to awake who never had been asleep. This error in Blackmore, Phillips, or any of Pope's poetical foes, would have gained him a place in Martinus Scriblerus on the art of writing on impossible subjects. Surely the blunder in the verses where Prince Vortigern is said to wear a painted cloak, won from a naked Pict, is as capable of excuse as Pope's *sleepless lovers, &c.*

Ruins built as Ornaments in Gardens, &c.

The arts of poetry and painting have licenses allowed to them of stepping o'er the modesty of nature, and why should it not be permitted to the art of gardening to indulge in some? To build ruins from the ground *de novo*, if we may so say, certainly is a strong effort of fancy. Martinus Scriblerus has quizzed this taste with no little humour; speaking of his hero, he says, "he builds, not with so much regard to present symmetry or convenience, as with a thought, well worthy of a true lover of antiquity, to-wit, the noble effect the building will have when it shall fall into ruin." A ludicrous story is told of a nobleman's gardener, who, shewing some visitors one of these modern ruins, on their expressing their admiration of the antiquities of the edifice, "Well, gentlemen, my lord means to build some *a good deal older next year.*"

Æsop and Dr. Swift

Have said that men wear two budgets, one behind and the other before them; in the former they carry their own faults, and in the latter the faults of their neighbours, by which means they see the

last more clearly. Swift, in one of his letters to Stella and Mrs. Dingley, has (to use a very vulgar phrase) given himself a good slap in the face. "I had a letter from Mrs Long, that has quite turned my stomach against her, no less than two *nasty* jests in it with dashes to suppose them. She is corrupted in that country town with vile conversation."—*Letter ii. vol. 4.* This, from the author of "Gulliver's Travels," is a very singular, or at least a very strong, instance of what are the contents of the wallet behind.

Income.

When a man has dismissed his follies, discovers his real friends, and has gotten in general a correct view of life, how much is his opinion improved with respect to what his quantity of pecuniary expenditure in the year *must* be. A person thus advanced in the knowledge of the world and himself, soon begins to find that the world, if well understood, is not worth courting his attention, or his labour; and he himself is as a little world within his own mind, and his wishes require as little of care and anxiety. He will soon agree with the Poet on the insignificance of worldly goods, as well as the shortness of their continuance—

Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long. *Goldsmith.*

Patronage and Patrons.

The miseries of this state have been described by satirists, ancient and modern, from Seneca to Dr. Johnson; but by none better than the Dean of St. Patrick's. Swift had felt what he described:

Suppose my lord and you alone,—
 Hint the least interest of your own,
 His visage drops, he kuits his brow;
 He cannot talk of business now.
 Or mention but a vacant post,
 He'll turn it off "with name your toast;"
 Nor could the nicest artist paint
 A countenance with more constraint.

*Dean Swift to Dr. Delany, on his Epistle to his
 Excellency Lord Carteret.*

Virgil,

Though he is allowed to be a bard of pathos, yet possesses little stores of invention, and his similies are often neither apt, nor beautiful, nor sublime. In the eleventh Æneid, his hero is surrounded by the enemy's darts and spears, and is compared by the poet, as he protects himself by his huge shield, to a traveller concealing himself in the fissure of a rock, or under some ruined gateway, at the coming on of a pelting and pitiless shower. This, surely, is not placing his hero in an attitude of warlike dignity. A true commen-

tator, and no one else, might say, it was to shew that Æneas cared no more for the "arrowy shower" of the enemy than he did for a natural one in April.

Quizzing a Critic.

Many would-be scholars praise whatever is written in Greek or Latin; whether because they can praise authors long since dead without envy or jealousy, or whether they wish to be thought very conversant with these ancient worthies, may be doubtful. Montaigne says that he often borrowed from Plutarch and Seneca without mentioning them, and then laughed at those critics who thought that they were abusing him, when in fact they were uttering severe strictures on their favourite ancients; or as the lively old writer expresses it, "giving Seneca and Plutarch a flip on the nose, when they aimed at me."

Classical Literature.

There is not a more effectual and pleasing introduction to the study and taste for classical erudition than the works of the late Mr. Harris, of Salisbury. His "Hermes" will introduce the

young student to a relish for grammar, by developing the rational grounds of that study: his "Philosophical Arrangements" will give a young person a clear and excellent notion of the art of logic: and his "Philological Enquiries" will inform him very pleasantly of much classical erudition, seldom to be met with in other authors. His "Three Treatises" have not only great merit in themselves, but will give a double delight to the scholar, by his very happy imitations of the style of that great master of reasoning, Aristotle. Mr. Harris writes in the style both of a man of erudition and a polite gentleman, and a man of piety; and by the *courtesy* of his writings, he invites young students to pursue his track; for

Study is like the heaven's glorious sun,
That will not be deep search'd with saucy looks.
Small have continual plodders ever won,
Save base authority from others' books.

Love's Labour Lost, act i. scene 1.

Poetical Critics.

When poets turn critics, they are liable to be influenced more by their imagination than their judgment; and to describe what the sculptor and painter, in their opinions, ought to have done, rather than to consider what their respective arts are capable of doing. Those who have examined

soberly the group of the Laocoon will not see further than that the attitudes of the parent and children exhibit very finely indeed their various agonies in the embraces of the serpent. A Poet goes much further—

On the rapt eye th' imperious passions seize;
 The father's *double* pangs both for himself
 And sons convulsed, to heaven his rueful look
 Imploring aid, and half accusing, cast
 In fell *despair*, with *indignation mixt*, &c.
Thompson's Liberty, part iv. l. 195.

Rules of Contraries.

These seem the safest principles on which to form our knowledge of mankind according to their own assertions. If a man talks of his courage, you may put him down as a coward, when danger is near; should man or woman talk of their tenderness of heart, do not trouble yourself to solicit charity of either; if a woman talks much of her chastity, do not be surprised at a trial in Doctors' Commons on that lady's account; if a man should make honourable mention of his own integrity and love of right, it would be very prudent not to trust your affairs in the hands of this self-approving man.

Avarice.

It is much the vogue with moral writers to treat this passion (too common indeed in old age) as totally without motive or excuse. They seem to consider it as a mere magpie propensity to steal and hide money. Avarice may plead for its defence, amongst old persons, the potency of gold to ensure respect to aged persons, when no other motive will induce mankind to pay them observance or attention. Men learn by experience that their money is their friend, their only support in the decline of natural pleasures. Old men soon perceive that they owe to gold, and not to their virtues or wisdom, that degree of attention from their fellow creatures that we all wish for. The rich man is secure of it.

This yellow slave
Will knit and break religions; bless the accurs'd,
And give them title, knee, and approbation
With senators on the Bench, &c.

Timon of Athens, scene 3.

Friendship.

"Idem velle et idem nolle ea demum fermè est amicitia," though a passage in a classic author of great eminence, is yet a very imperfect delineation of the friendship among the wise and honest.

The sportsman and the sot may call their associates in their different amusements friends, but the illness of any such friends would dissolve the partnership.

Romances.

Though the heroes and heroines in these sublime narratives seem sometimes in their sentiments to soar above humanity, yet when real passions take place of pompous diction and high vaunts, these ladies and gentlemen are contented, like Falstaff, to talk and act like men of this world. When the giant was killed or confined, the lady became very grateful to her knight; and ceased to be a heroine, when her lover became more interesting, as both were now in safety. Our merry and satirical Bard has well described these mock-heroic histories—

There was an ancient sage philosopher,
Who had read Alexander Ross over,
And swore the world, as he could prove,
Was made of fighting and of love.
Just so romances are, for what else
Is in them but loves and battles.

Hudibras, cant. 2.

N.B. A commentator, the least inclined to allegorize, might consider the giant as a crabbed father or guardian to the ladies, and the castles and monsters as so many restraints contained in the Marriage Act.

And, mere upholsterers, in a trice
 On gems and painting set a price.
 These tayl'ring artists for our lays
 Invent cramp rules, and with straight stays
 Striving free nature's shape to hit,
 Emaciate sense before they fit.

The Spleen: an epistle to Mr. C—J—, by Mr.

Matthew Green, of the Custom-House.

Dodsley's Coll. of Poems, v. i. p. 122.

Dr. Samuel Johnson,

The great author of the Rambler, both in his moral and critical works, exhibits his principal excellencies, ratiocination and common sense. Though many readers object to his language as tumid, and to an ostentatious display of eloquence in his moral essays, yet the latter fault, if it be one, may be defended by what he says of Swift's style of unvaried simplicity.* This easy and safe conveyance of meaning it was Swift's desire to obtain, and having attained, he deserves praise. For purposes merely didactic, when something is to be told that was not known before, it is the best mode; but against that inattention by which known truths are suffered to lie neglected, it makes no provision.

* Life of Swift, in his Lives of the Poets.

Who their ill-tasted home-brew'd prayer
 To the state's mellow forms prefer,
 Who doctrines as infectious fear
 Which are not steep'd in vinegar, &c.

Reformers.

Reforming schemes are none of mine:
 To mend the world's a vast design,
 Like their's who tug their little boat
 To pull them to the ship afloat,
 While to defeat their labour'd end
 At once both wind and stream contend.
 Success herein is seldom seen,
 And zeal when baffled turns to spleen.

Poets.

Or see some poet pensive sit,
 Fondly mistaking spleen for wit;
 Who, tho' short-winded, still would aim
 To fill the epic trump of fame;
 Who still on Phoebus' smiles will doat
 Nor learn conviction from their coat.

Critics.

On poem, by their dictatè writ,
 Critics as sworn appraisers sit,

And, mere upholsterers, in a trice
 On gems and painting set a price.
 These tayl'ring artists for our lays
 Invent cramp rules, and with straight stays
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* Life of Swift, in his Lives of the Poets.

This Johnson supplied in his revival of old truths, by a very splendid and variegated diction.

Advantages of Theatrical Exhibitions.

The instruction in our knowledge of the world, and the influence of the passions, by stage representations, if properly conducted, is beyond calculation. In the world, men and women conceal their passions and designs from each other, as much as they can; but in a well-written tragedy or comedy, the passions, &c. are discovered by the declaration of the agents themselves; and the author's design is to pluck the mask from the faces of vice and folly, and hold up the conduct of their characters as a warning to the audience. It was said of the famous Mr. Garrick, that he was only an actor off the stage; intimating his excellency in the performance of his theatrical characters, and blaming the affectation with which he enveloped his personal one in the society of his friends—

On the stage he was *natural, simple, affecting*;

'Twas only that when he was off he was *acting*.

Retaliation, by Dr. Goldsmith.

Translation and Imitation of Authors.

.. In poems, whose merit depends solely on the figures, metaphors, &c., a translator is obliged to

exhibit the author in his original dress. In works of humour, and satire, and wit, the application of an ancient writer's expressions and satire to modern manners and customs shews ability in the imitator, to which a mere translator could not pretend. Pope's imitations of Horace have more merit with an English reader than any literal translation could claim. To his translation of Homer it may be objected that he has not so much *rendered* the author, as he has rivalled or excelled him.

Visiting an Old School.

The expression of a natural feeling is always interesting, especially when it proceeds from a man of talents. Sir Henry Wootton describes the pleasure of visiting Winchester school, long after he had left it:—"Seeing the place where I sat when I was a boy, occasioned me to remember my youthful thoughts; sweet thoughts, indeed! that promised my growing years numerous pleasures without mixture of cares, and those to be enjoyed when time (which I thought slow paced) changed my youth to manhood; and now there is a succession of boys using the same recreations, and, questionless, possessed with the same thoughts.

Thus one generation succeeds another, both in their lives, recreations, hopes, fears, and deaths.⁶

—*Lloyd's State Worthies: Observations on the Life of Sir Henry Wootton.*

Wits indiscreet.

It has been ever a complaint against wits, that they want discretion as well as memory. Dr. South, though a witty and learned orator, did not always consider that propriety of speech so essential to serious discourses, and the places in which they are delivered. In a sermon preached at Court, the orator descanted on the superior enjoyment of intellectual pleasure over sensual gratifications, and how vastly disproportionate are the pleasures of the eating and thinking man; indeed, as different as the silence of an Archimedes in the study of a problem, and the stillness of a sow at her wash. So true is the observation of our great moral poet, who knew, so early and so well, how to combine the two faculties of wit and judgment:

Some to whom Heaven in wit has been profuse,
Want as much more to turn it to its use;
For wit and judgment often are at strife,
'Tho' meant each other's aid—like man and wife.

Essay on Criticism, line 99.

Poetry and Criticism.

When Dr. Johnson, with his usual penetration, declared of poetry, "that, after all, the claims of excellence must finally be decided by the *common sense* of mankind," many poets and many critics were alarmed for their trade. The poet is very willing to involve himself in sublime mysteries, and to cry out with the Roman bard,

Odi profanum vulgus et arceo;

and the critic is unwilling to part with his tones of authority and decision.

Critics, indeed, are valuable men,
But hypercritics are as good again.

a

Bramston's Epist. on Taste.

Commentators.

M. Bayle, speaking of Joseph Scaliger, says, that he doubted if this eminent scholar had not too much sagacity and science to make a steady and accurate commentator; for his wit and his knowledge (he feared) did often attribute more of both to the author he had in hand, than the author himself could claim. Bishop Warburton, a man superior to Pope both in science and general learning, certainly, in his notes on his friend's

essays, &c. ascribed more ingenuity and more profundity of thought, than Pope could pretend to, who was especially averse to metaphysical studies; and who declared that he could not relish the writings of Locke.

Tutors and their Scholars.

The former too often suppose themselves superior in talents, as well as acquirements, to those they are to instruct. This often proves a fatal error to the scholar; as many circumstances, exclusive of abilities, may have placed the tutor in a situation which he ill supplies. Such a person, instead of teaching

The young idea how to shoot,
acts as a nipping frost on the intellectual bud, and not rarely, by ill culture, destroys the very root, by planting it on a ground not suitable to it, or bestowing an injudicious care on it, when he has chosen the right soil.

Fools.

Among our ancient nobility two sorts of fools were entertained in their castles and at their tables. The former were really persons of defective intellects, the latter men of wit and vivacity. The real fools were the barbarous amusements of our

ancient nobles ; the assumed fools and clowns, such as we see represented in Shakespeare's plays, not only bore the jokes of their superiors, but returned them. Principles remain, though customs may vary ; and in modern times, few great tables are without knaves under the guise of fools, who, destitute of real spirit, suffer the jokes of their opulent entertainers to be showered on them at discretion. Dr. Young, who lived much among the great, describes these modern fools with great spirit—

Who'd be a crutch to prop a rotten peer,
Or living pendant dangling at his ear ?
Who'd be a glass, with flattering grimace,
Still to reflect the temper of his face ;
Or cushion, when his heaviness shall please
To loll, or thump it for his better ease ;
Or a vile butt for noon or night bespoke,
When the Peer *rashly* swears he'll club his joke ?
With terms like these how mean the tribe that close,
Scarce meaner they who terms like these impose, &c.
Love of Fame, satire 4.

Rhyme and Rhythm.

The former seems a grand enemy to the latter ornament in modern poetry. The music arising from rhythm and harmony are indeed, by readers in general, not so much attended to as the jingle of rhyme; and the monotony of Pope's versification is preferred by such readers to the more varied, yet

less smooth, versification of Dryden; and the studied modulation of the Miltonic muse boasts little value in the ear of the lover of rhyme; yet rhyme was the invention of rude ages, and continues the favourite of less learned readers. The author of *Hudibras*, an excellent scholar, justly estimated the value of rhyme, and has with his usual good sense and humour described it—

Those that write in rhyme still make
The one verse for the other's sake;
For one for sense, and one for rhyme,
I think's sufficient at one time.

Hudibras, canto 1.

Wit and Wisdom.

“Sir Thomas Wyatt, a favourite of Henry VIII. though a man of much facetious discourse, yet kept it,” says the author* of observations on his life, “within these rules:—1st. He never played upon a man's deformity or unhappiness, for that was inhuman. 2d. Not on superiors, for that was saucy and undutiful. 3d. Not on serious or holy matters, for that is irreligious. 4th. He had much salt but no gall, often jesting but no jeering. 5th. He observed times, persons, and circumstances, knowing when to speak and when to hold his peace. 6th. His apt and handsome

* Lloyd's State Worthies.

repartees were rather natural than affected, subtle and acute, prompt and easy, yet not careless, never rendering himself contemptible to please others. 7th. Not an insipid change of *words* was his gift, but a smart retort of *matters*, which pleased others more than himself."

Ridicule, the Test of Truth.

This is one of many propositions that defy discussion by the ambiguous difficulty of the terms in which it is conveyed. The obvious meaning of this doctrine, so great a favourite of Lord Shaftesbury,* seems to be, that his lordship thought a jest more conclusive than argument. Be it so. The noble writer has many superficial readers on his side; but a jest and an argument are not the same things, and truth can only be elicited by argument. It certainly was the interest of the noble writer to prove that ridicule should be considered as the test of truth, as his lordship, though a tolerable joker, was certainly a very inferior reasoner.

Physiognomy.

Many pretend to laugh at the influence which a particular character of face exerts over our feel-

* See his *Characteristics*.

ings, though they must often experience it. Without going the lengths of Lavater, who measures the *intellect* of a man, as well as forms conjectures of his disposition, yet many a time and oft will the air of the countenance let us into the penetration of our neighbour's mind, and be of use when we are about to contract any acquaintance with him, or negotiate any business.

Which is the villain? let me see his eyes,
That when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him.

Much Ado About Nothing, scene 5.

Moliere and Regnard.

Though the former claims a great superiority over the latter as a comic writer, yet has Regnard adhered more strictly to the manners and customs of his own nation. In Moliere, indeed, there is much of the *vis comica*; but much of the humour of his characters, and many of the incidents, are borrowed from Plautus and Terence. Moliere was a man of sense and genius, and when an important passion was to be treated as in *Tartuffe*, or "*The Hypocrite*," *vocem comædia tollit*, and then he is superior to Regnard's ludicrous, and no doubt more accurate, representations of French manners and frivolities.

Perspicuity in Writing.

It is well observed by the most sensible critic among the ancients, that all inferior writers are apt to be obscure. The youthful student, in his first attempt to write his thoughts, should be aware of the difficulty of conveying his meaning with clearness to his reader ; for an inattention to this truth has occasioned much darkness in prose and verse, with young authors. Lavater has said wisely, though perhaps somewhat quaintly, that “ he who is unintelligible is not intelligent.” Certainly, a writer must understand himself first; before he can hope that his readers can comprehend him. M. Fontenelle relates of himself, that when he sat down to write, he, from time to time, considered “ do I understand myself.” Voltaire has borne ample testimony to the perspicuity and force of M. Fontenelle’s writings: “ L’ignorant l’entendit, le savant l’admira.” The ignorant understand him, and the learned admire him.

Common Faults in Composition.

Some writers who have a greater command of words, and are in possession of a very few ideas, and those in an imperfect state, have recourse to a

specious and splendid style of composition in order to conceal this "plentiful lack of wit." They remind us of painters who are deficient in drawing, and hide this deficiency by using the most glaring and gorgeous colouring. Too many writers resemble Butler's hero—

For he could coin and counterfeit
New words with little or no wit.
Words, so debas'd and hard, no stone
Was hard enough to touch them on;
And when with noisy haste he spoke 'em,
The ignorant for current took 'em.

Hudibras, canto 1.

J. J. Rousseau's Observations on Women.

When this writer was not hurried into whims by his vanity, no one could think more justly, or express his thoughts with more true feeling and eloquence. "The first and most important quality in a woman is sweetness of temper, made to obey so imperfect a being as man, often full of vices, always liable to faults. A wife must very soon learn to suffer even injustice, and bear the wrongs inflicted by her husband without complaint, and preserve her temper, not only for his sake but her own. Ill-nature and obstinacy will but augment her woes, and she will soon find that these are not the arms from which she can expect

victory. Heaven did not give to women a soft and gentle voice to act viragos, or beautiful and delicate features to deform them by anger ; nor did Nature make them feeble in their frames that they should aim at power."

Again.

"The influence of woman is a government of gentleness, address, and politeness : her caresses are commands, her tears are her menaces, and her ready compliances her victory. In this state, families are best governed, wherein women have the ascendancy ; but when a woman disobeys the will of her husband, and wishes to usurp his government, misery, confusion, and evil reports, fall on that house. An agreeable and interesting figure in a female is a better ground of courtship than beauty : the graces of manner, &c. last longer than those brighter charms which inspire our love. A woman with a moderate share of attractions will please longer than a beauty ; and such a woman, thirty years after marriage, will have the same attractions as on the wedding-day ; whilst a beauty will lose her influence, in a few months, over her husband.

"It is said that women talk a great deal. I admit it, and consider this habit, not as a fault, but as a subject of approbation. Man talks less, because he wishes to give information ; women to utter

their sentiments agreeably; but who would wish for a learned woman as his wife, who sets up a tribunal of literature in the house, and appoints herself the lady president? A literary woman soon becomes the plague of her husband, her children, her servants, her acquaintance, and her friends.

“Love is not necessary for married persons: integrity, similarity of opinions, humours, and character, though they do not form a love match, yet they make marriage more comfortable and useful. In a situation like marriage, there are many duties to perform, which regard others as well as themselves, and affections which must be participated with others. Two lovers would be always thinking of themselves only, their own feelings, their own pleasures, and their own interests; and what then would become of the welfare of the children, or the peace and good establishment of domestic matters?”—*Les Pensées de J. J. Rousseau, citoyen de Geneve; Amsterdam, 1763.*

Homer.

Much has been written of late to prove that the Iliad is not only valuable for its poetical beauties, but also a repository of much historical knowledge; but I would ask these asserters of Homer's

historical merit, whether the old bard could have found any where, but in his own fertile imagination, such a state of manners, customs, and characters, as the *Iliad* exhibits? Can we suppose, in the prose of common sense, such a state of society, wherein heroes, who lived in gilt palaces and slept on beds of ivory and tortoise-shell, would curry their own steeds, and dress their own beef-steaks?

Anecdote of Oliver Cromwell.

The Usurper, when given over by his physicians, still persisted to say that he was certain that he should recover, and that God had given him assurance of it. To his particular friends he disclosed the artifice of his obstinacy: "If I recover," says the arch hypocrite, "I shall be considered by the people as a prophet; and if I die, what signifies to me that the world shall call me a liar and a cheat." This anecdote very much depends on the credit of M. Gayot de Pitaval, in his *L'Art d'orner l'Esprit, seconde partie*.

The Way of the World.

One would imagine that the world looked upon wealth with a very philosophic eye, by the generosity which they bestow, in report, so many

thousands gratuitously on their prosperous neighbours. If a man or woman has twenty thousand pounds, they give them another twenty very readily, and so on in proportion to the largeness of the real sum. On the contrary, it would seem that the world estimated the powers of genius at a very great price, as they very niggardly allow the possession of superior powers of mind or intellect to any one; nay, will but seldom give the men of talent their real dues. Ovid did not look upon the surface of things, when he sung—

Ingenio qui vult cedere nullus erit ;

yet it has been accurately said that men never think they have their share of money, but are quite contented with their allotment of understanding.

Quarrels among Authors.

Gay has very wittily said, and perhaps very sensibly felt, that—

Wits are game-cocks to one another.

Fable 10.

The line conveys a very large field of fancy. We see both authors with pens in their hands, that well represent the spurs which nature, as well as art, has affixed to the heel of their representative, the game-cock. Around the pit stand critics, who take the different sides, and encourage both the

combatants by their acclamations, and are more interested in their hopes of their favourite combatant's victory, than actuated by any feeling about the nature and merits of the contest.

Town and Country.

Whilst industry and ambition lead the busy part of men towards towns and cities, philosophy and the love of quiet recommend the pleasure and ease of the country. This sage retreat from the cares of life Cowley* has well described:—"To be a husbandman is but a retreat from the city; to be a philosopher, from the world; or rather, a retreat from the world as it is man's, into the world as it is God's. Perhaps Cowper had this distinction in his view—

God made the country, and man made the town.

Ceremonies.

How little they are connected with sentiment, may be seen, both in matters of religion and in the civil intercourse of life. Like the ancient Jew, the modern Christian, who places much of his moral or pious character on the performance of ceremonies, is found to have little in his practice. The man of the world, as he is called, who is

* Essay on Agriculture,

quite a "master of ceremonies" has not taken leave of one evil indulgence, soothed one irascible propensity, or improved himself in the principles of common honesty. He has learned to bow to his superiors with respect, to his equals with politeness, and to his inferiors with familiarity.

Speciosa pelle decorus,
Introrsum turpis.

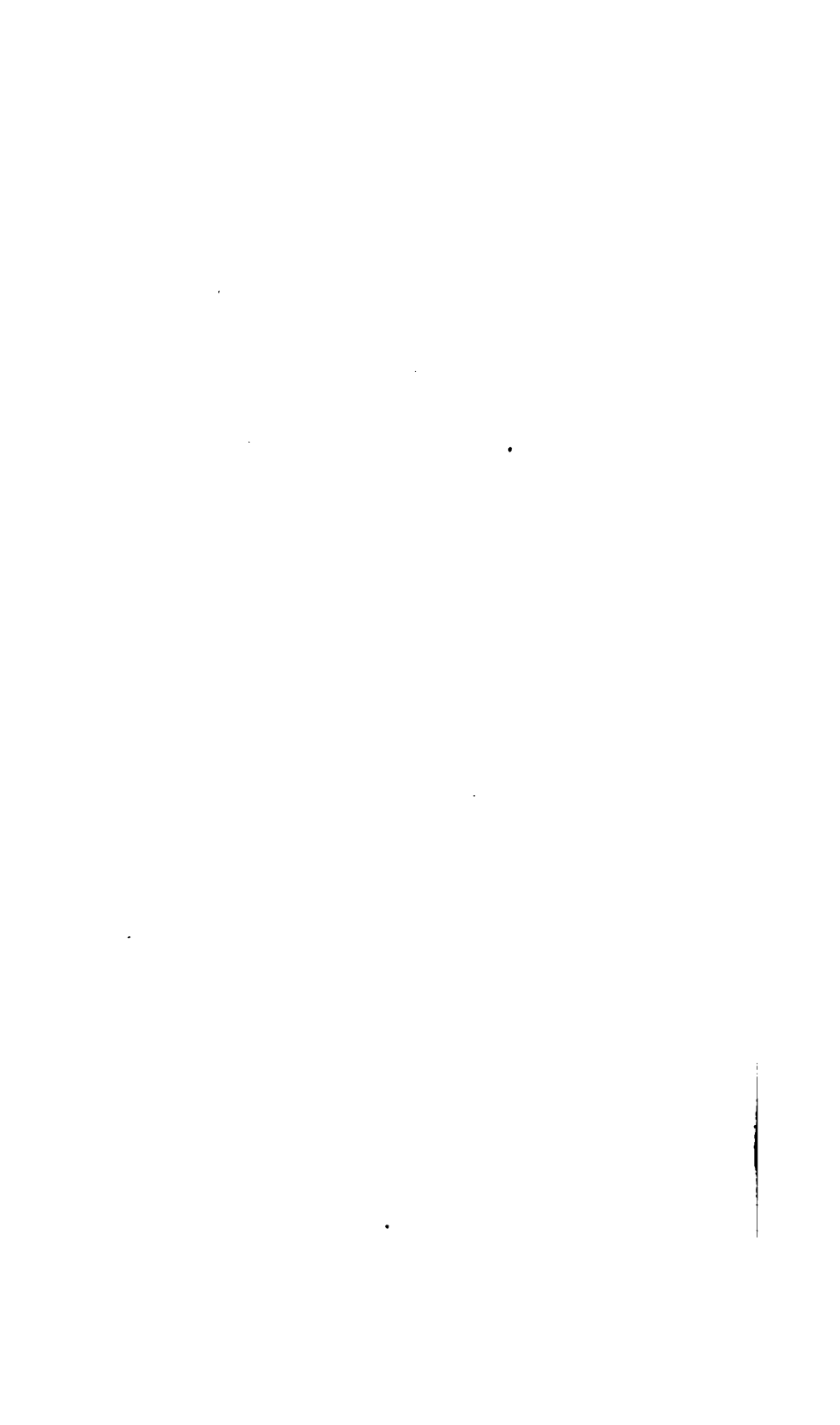
He can smile, and smile,
And be a villain.

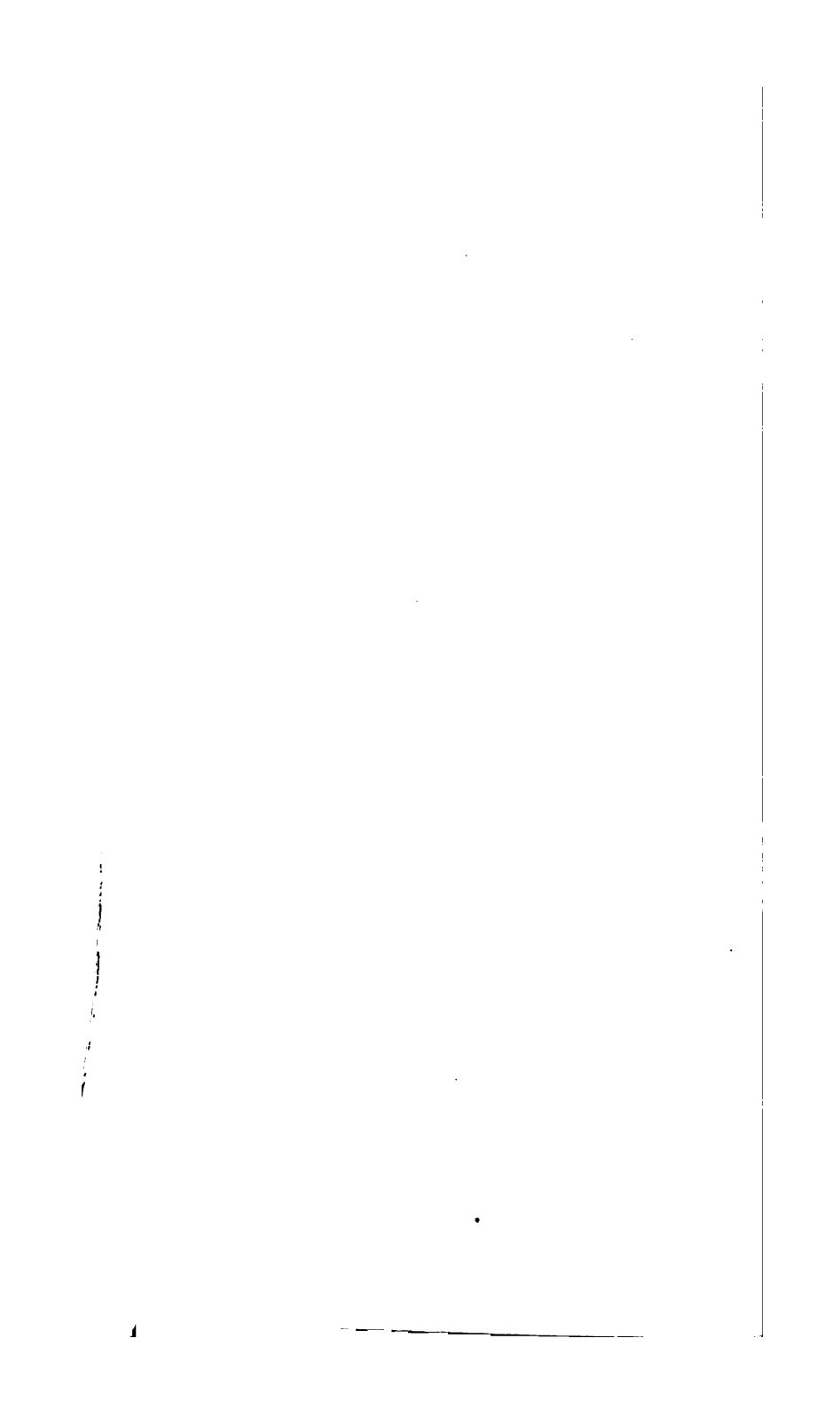
N.B. The Plausibles are a very large family, and always and in every place "at home."

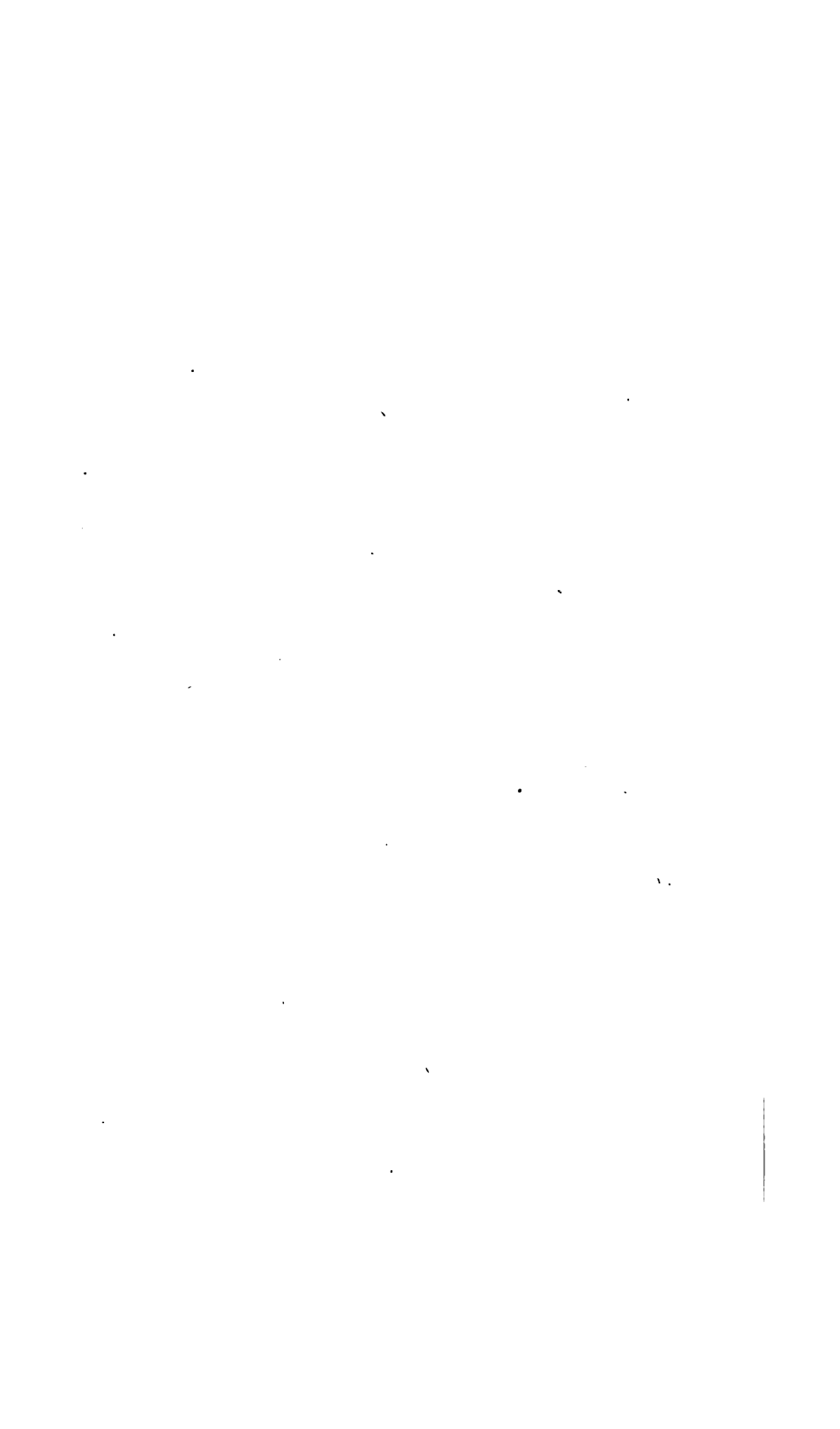
Huic tu, Ro nane, caveto.]

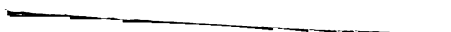
Let honest Englishmen avoid the knaves.

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